ISSN : 0252 - 8169

JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND AESTHETICS

A VISHVANATHA KAVIRAJA INSTITUTE PUBLICATION
VOLUME VII : NOS. 1-2 : 1984

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Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol.VII : Nos. 1 - 2 : 1984
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Artists' Aesthetic Criteria : An Anthropological View

KAREN L. FIELD

Introduction

Although they share a common interest in the arts, anthropologists and aestheticians rarely engage in dialogue. Over twenty years ago, Herskovits pointed out that philosophical studies of aesthetics"have lacked a cross-cultural dimension;" today, as then, aestheticians

> need to widen the base of aesthetic theory, to break through its culture-bound limits. If the aesthetic response is a universal in human experience, it must be studied as such, everywhere it is found.[1]

Anthropologists, for their part, have been reluctant to avail themselves of the insights of Western aesthetic theory, and their reluctance has on more than one occasion led them into conceptual "blind allies" in their studies of non-Western arts.[2] The lack of dialogue is nowhere more apparent than in discussions of aesthetic "universals." For at least three decades, anthropologists and aestheticians have been moving in very different directions on this question, and the progress of each has been slowed by the absence of exchange between disciplines.

Anthropologists have long assumed that certain properties of objects are capable of producing a universal aesthetic response. Their assumption rests upon material culled from a number of different theorists : Berenson's notion of "ideated bodily functions," the Gestaltists' positing of isomorphisms between certain forms and the electrochemical patterning of perception, Jung's work on universal symbols, Ozenfant's and Read's arguments for the universal salience of certain natural forms,

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and the emphasis placed by pre-Romantic aestheticians on such formal qualities as "unity, proportion, order."[3] A number of studies have empirically tested that assumption. Studies eliciting the aesthetic preferences of laypeople have produced little concordance,[4] but those eliciting the aesthetic criteria of artists and other art "experts" indicate considerable cross-cultural agreement in the kinds of objects judged to be aesthetically pleasing.[5] Bolstered by such findings, anthropologists have concluded that "there are universal standards of aesthetic quality,"[6] that

> behind such diverse objects as a Poro mask, the Venus de Milo,and a Peruvian jar, there are common factors of form, dynamic interrelation of parts, harmony of color, and so forth, which may appear in different combinations but are responsible for esthetic effect.[7]

Even in noncomparative studies designed to elicit emic aesthetic criteria, therefore, they have tended to concentrate on the *formal* qualities of art objects themselves.[8]

Aestheticians, on the other hand, have shifted their focus from the formal properties of the object to the *relation* between object and human being (the creator, the viewer, the social network in which the object is circulated, etc.). This shift in interest can be discerned as early as the Romantic period, with its growing fascination with the "man behind the work;" it came to fruition in the 1950's, Osborne's *Theory of Beauty*[9] being perhaps the last major work to attempt to define the "necessary and sufficient" conditions for work of art. Since then, one camp has seen the locus of the aesthetic experience in the attitude of the person who approaches it; this attitude is typically formulated as either one of "psychical distance"[10] or of "pleasure"[11]. The other camp denies that there is a special attitude involved in viewing art, and argue instead that the art object is defined "institutionally,"according to conventions accepted in the art world at a given point in time.[12] Despite their obvious differences, these schools of thought have in common the conviction that "the aesthetic" is *relational* in nature, rather than residing in the formal properties of objects themselves.[13]

Rapidly accruing studies of non-Western arts and aesthetics suggest that Western aestheticians may have been premature in their dismissal of universally salient formal properties.[14] At the same time, anthropologists, being largely unaware of recent trends in Western aesthetic theory, may have given too much attention to those same formal properties, while overlooking the relational-particularly, the attitudinal-components of the aesthetic experience among non-Western peoples. These are essentially empirical questions, which lend themselves to resolution through detailed comparative study of aesthetic phenomena in both Western and non-Western cultural milieux. Ironically enough, at the present time, there are more comprehensive ethnographic treatments of the development of aesthetic criteria in non-Western societies than in Western ones. The vast

majority of empirical studies of Western aesthetic judgment have been carried out, not "in the field," but in psychology laboratories. As Pepper has pointed out, this approach has yielded

> scanty material to the understanding of art. For the psychological laboratory is modeled on the physical laboratory, and its ideal of objectivity is the physical ideal of control by isolation and disintegrative analysis The problem for the empirical aesthetician is not to get the work of art out of its cultural context The problem is just the opposite, that of exhibiting the relevant cultural setting of the work of art and the relevant context of each discriminated detail.[15]

Furthermore, most of these studies have used laypeople as subjects. As noted earlier, anthropological research suggests that, if universal aesthetic properties do exist, they are likely to be revealed only in studies employing as informants artists and other art experts. The same may be true of the attitudinal components of the aesthetic. Aestheticians from Hume onwards have suggested that the nature of the "aesthetic attitude" should be induced from the experience of the "qualified observer" rather than the "man in the street."[16] And yet, despite the growing number of sociological studies of artists in the modern West, the nature and development of their aesthetic criteria remain largely undocumented.[17]

The present study is an effort to provide just such an empirically based and "contextual" treatment of American artists' aesthetic criteria. It is hoped that this effort will clarify the extent to which those criteria derive from the *formal* properties of objects or from the *relational* components of the aesthetic experience, and will thereby enhance our understanding of what is universal and what is culturespecific in the aesthetic experience.

Background of the Study

The data presented herein were collected as part of a larger study of the occupational socialization of the artist in the United States.[18] A year of participant-observation was carried out in three different types of art training institutions in the San Francisco Bay Area : an art school, the art department of a large university, and a community "art club." To guard against the possibility that these three research settings were atypical of their genre, another 300 hours of observation was carried out in similar institutions in the area. Open-ended interviews were conducted with 48 students and 22 teachers in all three settings, social network data obtained, and demographic data on students gathered from archives. In order to provide a greater temporal dimension, interviews were also conducted with a sample of 75 professional artists in the region, and a questionnaire eliciting similar data was sent to 300 alumni of the three institutions.

American Artists' Aesthetic Criteria

Participant-observation in drawing, painting and design classes revealed that certain qualities were recognized as components of a desirable or"good"art object in all three institutions. These qualities were : beauty, economy, rhythm, interest, innovation,coherence, expression,confidence,and honesty (see Chart,P. 7).[19] Analysis of these qualities reveals that, although they were all used to describe the art object itself, some refer explicitly to physical properties inherent in the object without overt appeal to its relationship to its producer (beauty, economy, rhytm, interest.) Others, while implying something about the physical properties of the object, focus principally upon its relationship to its producer (expression, confidence, honesty). Still others fall somewhere in the middle and are distinguished by direct reference to other objects, either those produced by the same artist or by other artists (innovation, coherence.) Thus, they may be arranged in a rough continuum ranging from the object-centered to the attitude- (producer)- centered, as in the chart.

To illustrate : in a lesson on color, an instructor turned to a project that had been propped against the blackboard and stated to the class :

> It has a marvellous jewellike quality The sense of progression in it is very *beautiful*. Who did it ?

QUALITIES OF ART OBJECTS

Object-centered

Column One Absence	Column Two Quality	Column Three Excess
UNPLEASANT (unattractive, unappealing)	BEAUTIFUL (attractive, appealing, lovely)	DECORATIVE (pretty)
BUSY	ECONOMICAL (Simple, clean, subtle)	STINGY
STIFF (choppy, spotty)	RHYTHMIC (fluid, flowing, balanced)	DESIGNY
MONOTONOUS (dead, flat, static, muddy)	INTERESTING (intriguing, exciting, dynamic)	
DERIVATIVE (safe) 1) Predictable, precious 2) Cliche	INNOVATIVE (fresh, inventive, original) 1) Re : own work 2) Re : others' work	GIMMICKY (cute)

UNFOCUSED (diffuse)	COHERENT 1) Re ; own work 2) Re : others' work	SLICK (facile)
CONSTRAINED (tense) 1) Tentative 2) Tight	EXPRESSIVE 1) Strong, vigorous 2) Loose	"ART AS THERAPY" 1) Out of hand 2) Uncontrolled
HESITANT	CONFIDENT	COMFORTABLE
DISHONEST 1) Contrived (put-on) 2) Raw : unfinished ; "playing around"	HONEST 1) Fidelity to self (sincerity) 2) Carried to certain level of completion	"ART AS MASTURBATION" 1) Self-involved (egocentric) ("obvious, blatant") 2) Overly manicureid, overworked

Attitude-centered

In order to evaluate the object as "beautiful," it was not necessary to know who the producer had been. In a different class, by contrast, an intructor told a student:

> I get the sense your work isn't very *honest*. It isn't personal enough.

In order to evaluate the object as not "honest," in this case connoting fidelity to self, it was obviously necessary that the teacher know-or think she know-who the producer had been and what his relationship had been to the object in question. In both instances, the evaluation related to the aesthetic success of the art object, but the second evaluation could only be made by including some knowledge of the producer'attitudes. "Innovation" and "coherence" were used of the object, but only as it related to other objects which the same or other proudcers had made. For example, an instructor remarked appreciatively to the researcher one day:

> That's a really *different* style for you. I haven't seen you work that way before. You're getting weird, karen.

while this evaluation was not predicated upon the producer's attitude-the teacher did not know the researcher's motives or feelings vis-a-vis the change-some knowledge of the producer and her customary way of working were prerequisites of the appraisal. "Innovation" and "coherence," then, "point both ways," towards object *and* producer.

In addition to this underlying dimension of object-centeredness *VS.* attitude-centeredness, analysis of the desirable qualities of an art object revealed a second similarity between them. Eight of the nine qualities had a pair of related pejoratives, one of which connoted an absence of the quality, and one of which connoted an excess of the qulity (see chart, p. 7),[20] For example, the quality of "rhythm" refers to the composition of a work : the grace, ease, or "rightness" of the way in

which the various lines, shapes, and negative spaces coalesce. Pejoratives such as "stiff," "choppy," and "spotty" were used of a work in which the composition was lacking in such ease, grace, and rightness ; one in which there was an absence of rhythm. On the other hand, instructors on several occasions implied that the composition of a particular object was *too* easy, too balanced, too "perfect," so that the rightness of the composition became the dominant quality of the work (seemingly at the expense of "interest,") In such cases, the object was referred to as "designy"—possessed of an *excess* of rhythm. It seems, therefore, that a successful art object exists along a kind of mean, its qualities in a delicate tension between "too much" and "not enough."

Keeping in mind these two unifying characteristics - the dimension of object-to attitude- centeredness and location at the mean-we may proceed to a more detailed definition of each of the nine desirable qualities of an art object. It should also be borne in mind that in no setting was it implied that an object need embody all nine qualities in order to be considered successful ; nor was every positively evaluated work described with one of the following terms. Thus, it is not claimed that the following list comprises either the necessary or the sufficient qualities of a successful work of art in the art training setting. However, it does comprise those qualities which are 1) frequetly mentioned; 2) common to all three settings ; and 3) acknowledged by both teachers and students. Ranging from primarily object-centered to prmarily attitude-centered, the qualities are :

1) *Beauty :* general appeal to the eye, stemming from the overall impact of the object (rather then any of its constituent parts), which encourages sustained contemplation. Its absence is not ugliness, but rather a lack of visual impact which discourages such contemplation, making the viewer "turn away" from the work so that other qualities which may be present are missed. An excess of visual-appeal by implication, at the expense of other qualities, such as expression and innovation-makes a work merely *decorative* or *pretty*. For example, an art department teaching assistant told a student who was working on a floral study in pastel colors :

Be careful of making a *pretty* picture It can get in the way of the concept.

2) *Economy:* achievement of the maximum effect possible with the minimum constituent parts ; in composition, simplicity, and in production, "knowing when to quit." Its absence makes a work *busy*, its constituent parts too many, too elaborate, or too individually intrusive to coalesce into a total effect. Its excess makes a work *stingy*, or composed of so few constituent parts that nothing much "happens" in the object.

3) *Rhythm:* the grace, ease, or "rightness" with which the parts of the object's composition coalesce ; when it is present, the eye moves easily around the composi-

tion. When it is absent, the composition is *stiff*; its parts do not seem to fit together and the movement of the eye is tripped up or impeded in inappropriate places. when it is excessive, it dominates the work at the expense of other qualities, and the work becomes *designy* (see p. 9).

4) *Interest*: the quality which "pulls" the viewer into the work, inducing him to spend time appreciating both its constituent parts and its overall impact, and experincing the full range of its possible effects. *Beauty* is experienced in the contemplative mode ; *interest* belongs more to the analytical. Interest may derive from any or all aspects of the work- its content, an unusual use of the medium, a surprising juxtaposition of shapes-but generally implies some degree of complexity. For example, a drawing teacher commented to the researcher :

> What you need to worry about is the fact that those figures pop out of that dark background too much because there's too much contrast between the red and the black. what you need to do is add some black to those figures to create more visul *interest* . If you bring some of the black in here, it'll drop this part back and create a kind of a Gordin knot-that's what you want, like a Gordian knot, so it's more intriguing to the eye.

where interest is absent, the object becomes monotonous- the viewer is not induced to invest time in its analysis or to experience its range of possible effects. Being thus inhospitable to change over time (whether in its own aspect, or in the viewer's reaction). the work may thus be termed *static* rather than *dynamic*. It does not "pull the viewer in ;" it "just sits there."

5) *Innovation*: the inclusion of some aspect or aspects which differentiate the object from prior products, thus expanding the repertoire of the artist-producer or of art in general. Innovation is valued at two levels. At the individual level, it means that each object which the student produces should be unique, should exhibit some property not exhibited in her past works. At the group level, it means that students should produce objects which do not strongly resemble the objects produced by other artists. where this quality is absent, the work is called *derivative* or *safe*. On the individual level it becomes *predictable:* the student is stuck in a rut, and it becomes the teacher's job to try to jolt her out of it, no matter how many of the other desirable qualities the work may contain, On the group level, it bacomes *cliche:* the style or the subject matter or the concept has been treated by so many artists that it is no longer considered appropriate material for an art object. [21] The example *par excellence* of the latter phenomenon- cited, interestingly enough, in all three settings, and always with rueful humor- is the portrait of the "sad clown." In excess, however, and when added not to expand one's

repertoire or that of art in general, but rather for its own sake, as an attention-getting device, innovation becomes *gimmicky*, or *cute*. Comparing two of her own drawings, for example, an art student said :

> The one on the cream-colored paper is a lot more effective. I thought I'd try the blue, because it looked nice and I'd never tried it before, but it's too *cute*.

6) *Coherence*: consistency with other objects, to the extent that the object seems a logical outgrowth of prior work and seems to build upon it, *e. g*, , by elaborating a concept or carrying further an experimental use of medium. Like innovation, coherence operates at two levels. At the individaul level,coherence is present when a concern of the artist can be traced through objects prdouced at about the same time; it is because of this quality that we may speak of Warhol's "disaster paintings" or Rauschenberg's "combine paintings." At the group level, coherence is present when artists consciously link up with and build upon the work of other artists with related concerns ; hence the "minimalists." the "superrealists," The quality of coherence thus stands poised in delicate tension with the quaeity of innovation. Absence of coherence makes a work *unfocused*, diffuse, or "off the wall ;" at the group level, it may also make it *pass'*è or, potentially, "ahead of its time." An excess of coherence--consistency to the point of easy repetition or linking up with a movement simply because it is *au courant*-- makes an object *slick*, *facile*, or, on the group level, *faddish*.

7) *Expression* : reflection in the work of the internal feeling-states of the producer. When an object is expressive, the materials of which it is composed have been manipulated in such a way that they convey something about its creator. Emotional tone is often, but not always, implied.[22] Work which is expressive may be described as *strong* or *vigorous*, meaning that its constituent parts work together to convey an impression of the human energy behind them. It may also be described as *loose*, meaning composed in such a way as to the give impression of a free and unimpeded flow of communication from producer to viewer : nothing "gets in the way." Absence of expression makes a work *constrained*, *tense* ; if it is not strong, it is *tentative*, little energy being conveyed by the play of its parts. and if it is not loose, it ts *tight*--the flow of communication is somehow constricted, as in an awkward conversation. Where expression is excessive--too strong (*out of hand*) or too loose (*uncontrolled*)--the result is what several persons referred to as "therapy" masquerading as art. The internal feeling-states of the produeer overwhelm the work at the expense of other quaeities (*e. g.* , beauty. ceonomy). While creation of such an object may be cathartic for the producer- hence the appellation "therapy"—the result is not considered an appropriate candidate for the title "art object."

8) *Confidence* : a degree of virtuosity sufficient to convey to the viewer that producer achieved what he intended to achieve, through mastery of the appropriate means. The notion of craftsmanship is often, but not always, included, [23] Where confidence is absent, the work is described as *hesitant.* An art department teacher expressed barely- disguised contempt for "chicken maneuvers" and for a student who, while drawing, acted "like you"re afraid it's going to bite." An excess of confidence—and included here is a display of craftsmanship for its own sake—makes an object *comfortable :* it conveys the impression that what was achieved too easily, that the producer could have employed the means in his sleep. Aesthetic virtuosity thus implies at least some struggle, some possibility of failure that was overcome ; to be confident in the face of certainty is considered a poor sort of confidence.

9) *Honesty :* fidelity to one's own standards, on one hand, and willingness to carry a work to a certain level of completion, on the other. An object which is honest in the first sense conveys the impression that the effort involved in its production was a sincere attempt—the purpose or success of the attempt being in this context irrelevant, and the sincerity, or genuine meaningfulness to the producer, being pivotal. An absence of such honesty makes a work *contrived :* one is manipulating media in a certain way because it meets others' standards, not one's own, or one is pretending to make a sincere attempt at a certain end without having any real commitment to the manifest task (a *put-on*). Carrying work to a certain level of completion shows a willingness to stay with an attempt , to give it a "fair chance ; at success, thus also conveying sincerity. Where honesty in this sense is absent, the work is *raw, unfinished* ; the object conveys the impression is simply *playing around.* On the other hand, when work is too concerned with one's own standards at the expense of any and all relation to the viewer or of other aesthetic qualities (*e. g.* , interest, innovation), it becomes *self-involved* or else *obvious* and *blatant.* This is the phenomenon which one art school student described as "art as masturbation : "

> I don't have anything to say about them (my drawings). Can't art just be like masturbation ? I don't know why I did them, it was just a game.

The comment precipitated a heated discussion in which the instructor and other students opposed the notion that art could be totally self-involved, without attention to communication or regard to external standards ; said one student, "in that case, why bother to do it ?" An excess of completion-- carrying work beyond the appropriate level-- made it *overly manicured, overworked* : giving an attempt a "fair chance" thus became a kind of "over-kill."

Open-ended interviews revealed some differences between teachers' and students' aesthetic criteria. When instructors in all settings were asked what they considered a "good" art object to be, they all tended to emphasize the more attitude-centered and of the aesthetic continuum. There was a discrepancy between teachers' standards and students' perceptions of those standards in all settings. Students tended, on the whole, to perceive their teachers as being more concerned with object-centered qualities than they actually were. Their own aesthetic concerns were more object-centered also, in a pattern almost homologous with the concerns they attributed to their teachers. These data indicate that in all systems, some frustration may result from the fact that students keep concentrating on qualities like economy and rhythm, while teachers are more concerned with seeing expression and honesty emerge in their work. Integral to the activity of the art classroom, then, is the process of learning to establish priorities among aesthetic *desiderata*, moving from-- perhaps by mastering-- object-centered qualities to attitude-centered ones. Considering the student data diachronically, it seems that such a movement does in fact take place; older students are signficantly more likely to describe a "good" piece of art in terms of attitude-centered qualities than are beginning students,[24]

Variation Between Training Systems

Some variation between training systems appears to exist. Teachers at the art school mentioned attitude-centered qualities almost exclusively. The highest proportion of object-centered responses came from art club teachers, while instructors at the art department tended to mention both in equal proportions. Students seemed to "pick up on" the aesthetic criteria of their instructors. Art school students were the likeliest, overall, to stress attitude-centered qualities ; art club students were likeliest to mention object-centered qualities; and art department students were about equally divided between attitude, object, and "both." Each setting thus maintains its unique variation on the aesthetic themes which they all hold in common, the art school being most strongly inclined toward attitude, the art club toward object, and the art department toward both. Observation, also, indicated that discussion at the art school tended to touch on the attitude-centered end of the continuum and at the art club, on the object-centered. That is, teachers at the art school were likely to discuss an object in terms of its expression, or to condemn it for being dishonest, giving a passing comment on, *e. g.*, its beauty, whereas teachers at the art club were likely to praise an object's beauty or to criticize its "designy-ness." giving a passing comment on its expression. Discussions at the art department were characterized

by references to the qualities at the mid-point of the continuum, coherence and innovation: thus. where teachers and students were most concerned with both attitude and object, they emphasized the qualities which point, "both ways." At the risk of oversimplification, one might summarize these differences by saying that art school students learn to produce self-oriented art (whose quality depends to a large extent on its relationship to its producer); art department students learn to produce art-oriented art (whose quality depends to a large extent on its relationship with other works of art) ; and art club students learn to produce viewer-oriented art (whose quality depends to a large extent on the visual characteristics which it presents to the viewer).

As for the sources of this variation, the greater bias of the art school toward self-oriented, or attitude-centered, art stems at least in part from the fact that a higher proportion of instructors there were trained in the Bay Area, with its long involvement in expressionistic styles, and had themselves been steeped in the art school's institutional milieu, characterised by both avant-gardism and a continuing involvement with the subjective mode of abstract-expressionism.[25] The greater heterogeneity of instructors' geographical backgrounds and the weaker institutional aesthetic milieu at the art club help account for the lesser interest in that subjective mode. The greater diversity of faculty backgrounds may militate against the promulgation of theory and turn instruction toward those facets of art that are more easily agreed upon-- the visual appeal of the physical characteristics of the object. Also, the art club faculty's comparative lack of orientation toward the elite fine-arts market helps explain why innovation and coherence-- qualities which refer explicitly to other works of art-- are not greatly stressed. By the same token, the high degree of orientation toward that market among art department faculty probably acoounts for the concern which those qualities are accordcd in the university setting. One might also speculate that the greater academic bias of that setting, together with its proximity to an art history department, makes the relationship of a work to other works a particularly salient concern. There is another unique aspect of the department students' situation which may help account for the interest in innovation and coherence shown in that setting : unlike students at the art school and the art club, they perceive their peers' aesthetic standards as being significantly different from their professors'. While the greater proportion see their teachers' concerns as being primarily object-centered, they perceive their peers' concerns as being primarily attitude-centered. Thus, in attempting to meet the aesthetic expectations of both sets of "significant others," they come

to concentrat on those qualities which point "both ways" on the aesthetic continuum.

How Aesthetic Criteria Are Acquired

The process whereby young artists develop the aesthetic criteria described above is complex, and can only be sketched here in its most general outlines.[26] In interviews with professional artists and students alike, four aspects of art training emerged as most influential: teachers; curriculum (the actual content of the art classes); peers (fellow students); and the "personal development" which some informants saw as taking place in themselves during the time that they spent in school. Of these four aspects, teachers and curriculum were judged to be the most influential of all.[27] Since it is teachers who structure the curriculum, these two influences cannot be completely disentangled; but generally, by "teacher influence," informants referred to *comments* made by instructors, and by "curriculum." they referred to the *nature of the tasks* set out for them in the course of their classes and to the *provision of positive models, i. e.* . of examples of what art "should be,"

Teachers' comments were of three main types: comments made to individual students about their work during class ; comments made to the class as a whole about trends observed in the class's work; and comments made during formal critiques, which were an integral part of instruction in all three settings. These comments could be either positive-- reinforcing some aspect of the student's work-- or negative-- discouraging some aspect of the studet's work. Of the three types, those made during critiques appeared to carry the most weight, since they were made in a public setting with all eyes turned toward the work of the student in question, and since they constituted appraisals of finished works. Analysis of the kinds of comments made in all three settings revealed that teachers repeatedly attempted to encourage the nine qualities detailed earlier, and to discourage their absence or excess, but with differing emphases consistent with the variations described in the last section.

The nature of the tasks was similar in all classes, namely, the actual production of a drawing or painting or some part there of during the course of the class period, which afforded the instructor an opportunity to observe the process of production as well as its end products, and to comment and intervene along the way, Variations in this basic framework also appeared to contribute to the variations in aesthetic criteria described above. At the art club, for example, a "set-up" of objects to draw or paint was always provided, and students were expected to use it. At the art school, by contrast, a "set-up" was not always provided, and

when it was, working "from" it was never mandatory. This difference would appear to underscore the greater orientation of the art club toward the *formal* properties of the art object itself, and the greater orientation of the art school toward *relational* factors, such as the attitude of the student-artist toward his work.

Positive models were of three main types. The first was a model from the instructor's own work ; this could be a direct intervention by the instructor on the student's painting or drawing, a sketch by the instructor on paper or blackboard, a technical demonstration ("demo"), or a finished work brought to class for the students to view. The second was a model culled from student work; for example, the instructor might stop the classroom action and draw the students' attention to one of their peers' drawings, or might use drawings from a previous class to illustrate "do's" and "don'ts." The third was the use of well-known artists' work, either through books and slides, recommendations, of books or exhibitions, or recommendations of books or exhibitions, or recommendations of copying from some well-known work as a technical exercise. Again, the types of models provided, and the comments which accompanied them, tended to emphasize the nine qualities described above and to discourage their absence or excess. And again, variations between systems reinforced variations in aesthetic emphasis. For example, the art school provided significantly fewer positive models of all types to its students than did either the art department or the art club, reinforcing the idea that the artist's own attitude toward his work was more important than any tangible aspects of the work itself. The art department-- which, it will be recalled, stressed the "art-oriented" qualities of coherence and innovation-- provided significantly more models of well-known artists' work to its students than did either of the other two systems.

The action which takes place in the art classroom is thus a multifaceted, ongoing process, the purpose of which is the inculcation of aesthetic criteria. Consistent variations in the nature of that process help account for variations in the degree to which certain criteria are more strongly inculcated in some systems than in others.

Conclusions

These findings concern one category of "art experts," professional artists, in one Western culture, the contemporary United States. Pending further research, therefore, conclusions drawn from them can be at best provisional. Yet they do appear to shed some light upon the questions raised in the introduction to this paper.

The fact that aesthetic criteria described herein embrace *both* formal and relational properties indicates that both types have cross-cultural--perhaps even universal--salience. This finding lends credence to the dominant frameworks of both anthropologists, and aestheticians, with their respective emphases upon the formal and relational aspects of aesthetic judgment. At the same time, the fact that these two types of aesthetic criteria coexist in one culture suggests that each group of scholars has been somewhat limited in their approach to the study of aesthetic phenomena: that anthropologists need to extend their attention beyond the object itself and investigate the attitudinal components of aesthetic judgment, while aestheticians may have been too hasty in turning from the formal properties of objects to locate "the aesthetic" in subjective feeling-states or in institutional conventions.[28]

For example, anthropologist Alan P. Merriam, in his study of Bala musicians, is quick to conclude that the Bala have no "aesthetic" in the Western sense of the term.[29] He bases this conclusion upon the observation that music is not "abstracted from its context" and therefore does not bring into play the phenomenon of "psychical distance." [30] The present study suggests that by no means all Western aesthetic criteria involve "abstracting" a work from its context; that, indeed, certain criteria, such as coherence and innovation, have meaning only in relation to the context of other works, while the more attitude-centered criteria, such as honesty and expression, derive their meaning precisely in their relationship to the artist's "total framework of belief and behavior." [31] Merriam also argues that the Bala lack an aesthetic because they have no concept of "beauty" and "in the Western aesthetic, beauty is irrevocably tied up with art." [32] But the present study confirms what aestheticians since Shaftesbury have implied-- that beauty is only one aspect of the aesthetic.[33] A more inclusive definition of the Western "aesthetic," derived from empirical observation, might have permitted Merriam to reach quite different conclusions about the presence of a Bala "aesthetic."

Art history and art criticism provide much evidence that relational caiteria have been important in the aesthetic judgments of non-Western peoples. In classical China, for example, scholarly painting was judjed by quite different standards than court painting, and among those standards was the extent to which the work reflected the spiritual vigor, intuition, and individuality of the scholar-painter.[34] In traditional India, the worth of a Hindu sculpture derived not only from its formal harmonies but also from the spiritual discipline and insight of its creator.[35] Guènon even suggests that much of the impact of medieval Western

art is lost to the modern viewer because he lacks knowledge of the esoteric principles and training which animated its producers.[36] All this suggests that the usual procedures used by anthropologists, whereby native informants are shown various art objects and asked to indicate which the "like best" and why, may miss important *relational* criteria involved in aesthetic judgment, since the technique tends to skew responses in the direction of the *formal* properties of the objects themselves. Studies which are explicitly designed to elicit the attitudinal aspects of aesthetic response among non-Western peoples might reveal significant cross-cultural commonalities.

The present findings also suggest, however, that there may indeed be formal properties which are aesthetically salient in all or nearly all cultures. The emphasis placed be informants on 'the mean" as an aesthetic *desideratvm*, discouraging both absence and excess of the nine salient qualities, is echoed in studies of non-Western aesthetic criteria. Fernandez, for example, has chronicled the emphasis placed in Fang aesthetics upon "permanent and balanced opposition."[37] Thompson lists as central aesthetic criteria of the Yoruba "midpoint mimesis," a balance "between absolute abstraction and absolute likeness,"[38] "the calming virtue of symmetry,"[39] and an appropriate tension between roundness and straightness. Gerbrands mentions "symmetry," "balance," and "harmony" as guiding criteria in the judgment of Dan masks.[40] Though the particular qualities in question may differ, and though cultures may locate "the mean" at different conc-tual points, the notion that aesthetic qualities involve a delicate tension or balance between "too much" and "not enough" appears to be extremely widespread cross-culturally.[41]

There is evidence that certain, if not all, specific formal properties found to be salient in American artists' aesthetic evaluations are salient in other cultures as well. Dan masks should exhibit the quality of "rhythm."[42] The japanese aesthetic has always viewed "economy" as a hallmark of successful art works.[43] Innovation-- long held to be anathema to "traditional" arts-- is increasingly being recognized by anthropologists as a consciously cultivated artistic goal in all parts of the world, particularly if its definition is broadened to include the acceptance of diffused traits and minor, rather than dramatic, departures from past forms.[44]

Aestheticians may immediately object that an assumption of universally salient aesthetic qualities renders incomprehensible the derision and bafflement with which western observers have frequently greeted non-Western art forms. What seems probable is that such qualities, though they may be finite in number. are not all present in the aesthetic repertoire of all cultures, and that they are

not stressed in equal measure. Just as most American artist informants placed a higher value on honesty and expression than they did on economy and rhythm, other cultures may place a higher premium on formal qualities like interest and beauty than, for example, on relational qualities like confidence. This difference would account for the oft-repeated observation of anthropologists that many non-Western peoples appear to 'stress technical skill rather than personal expression,"[45] and would also account for the initial inability of observers to perceive the aesthetic merits of unfamiliar art styles. Such an interpretation suggests that one of the main processes involved in intercultural artistic contact is the expansion of one's aesthetic "vocabulary" to include emphases not current in one's own cultural milieu. The conditions under which expansion is facilitated have been tentatively sketched by authors as diverse as Muensterberger and Fanon,[46] and clearly deserve greater attention from Western aestheticians.

If it is true that there are certain formal and relational factors that are aesthetically salient in most or all cultures, then it is clearly imperative that anthropologists and aestheticians acquaint themselves with one another's dominant frameworks in order to sketch a full and accurate picture of the nature of aesthetic phenomena. Such a conclusion would also necessitate revisions in the "institutional" approach to art, which until now has largely denied the existence of aesthetic universals, preferring to explain aesthetic phenomena as the products of culture-specific "conventions," At the same time, scholars will still confront the task of explaining why it is that different cultures emphasize different aesthetic qualities ; and in that task, the institutional approach promises to remain useful, for it mandates careful attention to the specific historical and ethnological conditions which shape the aesthetic of a particular people. In order to explain why the bulk of the American artists observed in the present study emphasized the attitude-centered pole of the aesthetic continuum, it would be necessary to trace the emergence of the Romantic aesthetic from the matrix of the Industrial Revolution, to acknowledge the profound challenge issued to Western artists by the development of photography, and to invoke the increasing marginality of the artist in the economy of late capitalism.[47] In order to clarify what "innovation" and "coherence" mean in any particular society, it is obviously necessary to have some knowledge of the artistic conventions currently prevailing in that culture.[48] And, in order to explain the existence of intracultural aesthetic variation. it is necessary to have detailed accounts of the institutional processes and practices through which various groups in

society acquire their aesthetic criteria. Explanations like these can be predicated only upon careful, case-by-case investigations which locate aesthetics squarely within their sociocultural settings. To this end, research strategies already advanced by anthroplogists like Maquet and D'Azevedo [49] might be fruitfully grafted onto the institutional approach to aesthetics, the better to facilitate cooperation between the two disciplines.

Greater unity between two hitherto disparate fields can only enhance our understanding and appreciation of the universal principles which undergird the contents of our constantly-expanding "museum without walls." [50] and of the concrete processes which bring them to life.

Notes and References

1. Melville J. Herskovits, "Art and Value" in *Aspects of Primitive Art.* ed. Robert Redfield, Melville J. Herskovits, and Gordon F. Ekholm (New York, 1959), P 44.
2. For example, some anthropologists have argued that because a local word for "art" or "beauty" does not exist, the people in question cannot be said to have art or aesthetic criteria; see, *e. g.* , Roy Sieber, "Approaches to Non-Western Art" and John Ladd, "Conceptual Problems Relating to the Comparative Study of Art" in *The Traditional Artist in African Societies*, ed. Warren L. d'Azevedo (Bloomington and London,1973). Others have maintained that "an aesthetic" cannot be said to exist in cultures where no distinction is drawn between "beauty" occuring in art and "beauty" occurring in nature; see, *e. g.* , Harold K, Schneider, "The Interpretation of Pakot Visual Art" in *Man*, Vol. 56, No. 108 (August, 1956), PP. 103-106, and Nelson Graburn, "The Eskimos ahd Commercial Art" in *The Sociology of Art and Literature : A Reader*, ed. Milton C. Albrecht, James H. Barnett, and Mason Griff (New York, 1970).
3. Bernard Berenson, *Aesthetics and History* (Garden City, 1948); Rudolf Arnheim, *Toward a Psychology of Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966): Carl Jung (ed.), *Man and His Symbols* (New York, 1964); Amadee Ozenfant, *Foundations of Modern Art* (New York, 1952); Herbert Read, *Education Throvgh Art* (London. 1943); Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical*

Greece to the Present : A Short Histo y (New York. 1966), P. 95.

4. W. A. McElroy. "Aesthetic Appreciation in Aborigines of Arnhem Land: A Comparative Experimental Study" in *Oceanic*, 23 (1952), pp. 81-94 ; Monica Lawlor. "Cultural Influences on Preferences for Designs" in *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 61 (1955). pp. 690 692; Robert Lowie, "A Note on Aesthetics" in *American Anthropologist*, 33 (1921), pp. 170-174.

5. Irvin L. Child and Leon Siroto, "Bakwele and American Aesthetic Evaluation Compared" in *Ethnology*, Vol, 4, No. 4 (1965), pp. 349-360; Sumiko Iwao and Irvin L. Child, "Comparisons of Esthetic Judgments by American Experts and Japanese Potters" in *Journal of Social Psychology*, 68 (1966), pp. 27-34; C. S. Ford, E. Terry Prothro, and Irvin L. Child, "Some Transcultural Comparisons of Esthetic Judgment," in *Journal of Social Psychology*, 68 (1966), pp. 19-26; Sumiko Iwao and Miguel Garcia, "Further Evidence of Agreement between Japanese and American Esthetic Evaluations" in *Journal of Social Psychology*, 75 (1969), pp, 11-15.

6. Raymond Firth, *Elements of Social Organization* (New York. 1950), p. 161.

7. Robert Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values : Method and Perspective" in *Anthropology*, ed. R F. Spencer (Minneapolis, 1654 . p. 166.

8. See, *e. g.* , Peggy Golde and Helena C. Kraemer, "Analysis of an Aesthetic Values Test" in *American Anthropologist*, 75 (1973), pp. 1260-1275 : Harry R. Silver, *The Mind's Eye: Art and Aesthetics in an African Craft Community*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University (1976). It should be noted that not all anthropologists have ignored the relational components of the aesthetic nor failed to take developments in Western aesthetic theory into account: see. *e, g.* , Jacques Maquet, *Introduction to Aesthetic Anthropology*, McCaleb Module in Anthropology, Addison-Wesley (1971).

9. Harold Osborne, *Theory of Beauty* (New York, 1953).

10 Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and Aesthetic Principle" in *British Journal of Psychology*, 5 (1912), pp. 87-118; Jerome Stolnitz, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art Criticism* (Boston, 1960).

11. See, *e. g.* , J. O. Urmson, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 31 (957).

12. George Dickie, "The Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude" in *Introductory Readings in Aesthetics*. ed. John Hospers (New York, 1969), pp. 28-45; *Art and the Aesthetic : An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, 1974).

13. Exceptions to this trend do exist. but even they tend to define "the

aesthetic" negatively rather than positively-- as *non*-monotonous, *non*-chaotic, *non*-overfamiliar. Cf. Richard W. Lind, "Attention and the Aesthetic Object" in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol 39, No.2 (1980), pp. 131-142.

14. Carried to its logical extreme, such dismissal would validate the "withdrawal" of aesthetic quality and content from works of art at the whim of the artist, as in the case of Robert Morris's withdrawal of such quality and content from his work, " Litanies," November 15, 1963. At least one critic has rejected this logical extreme, contending that "aesthetic qualities inhere in things The aesthetic is not an element that exists separately, to be banished at the will of the the artist" (Harold Rosenberg, "De-aestheticization" in *The De-Definition of Art* (New York, 1972), p. 35.

15. Stephen C. Pepper, *Aesthetic Quality: A Contextualistic Theory of Beauty* (Westport, Conn. , 1937), pp. 11-13.

16. In a recent interview carried in the Kansas City *Times*, artist Richard Diebenkorn was quoted as saying that the viewer should not expect art to be immediately accessible, and should be willing to work at understanding what the artist has in mind.

17. Mason Griff, "The Recruitment and Socialization of Artists" and Anselm Strauss, "The Art School and Its Students : A Study and An Interpretation" in *The Sciology of Art and Literature : A Reader*, ed. Milton C. Albrecht, James H. Barnett, and Mason Griff (New York, 1970); Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley, 1982).

18. Karen L. Field, *Doing What I Love : The Socialization of the Artist in the United States*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University (1979). The research and writing involved in this work were supported by National Institute of Mental Health Fellowship /=/5 F31 MH05917-02, and benefitted greatly from critical comments by George Spindler, John LaPlante and Barbara Rosenblum. It should be noted that this research focused on only one group of Western "art experts," namely, practicing artists. Until empirical research is conducted on the development of aesthetic criteria among other types of art experts-- aestheticians, critics, and the like-- it is impossible to determine the extent to which findings on the American artist are extrapolable to other categories of experts in the modern West.

19. For inclusion in this list, words had to meet the following criteria : 1) the capitalized word in column two, or one of its synonyms in parentheses, had to have been mentioned in reference to a student-produced art object at least five (5) times in each

setting : 2) at least one of the references had to have been made by an instructor and at least one by a student ; and 3) at least three of the references had to have been made in different classes taught by different instructors. The purpose of the first criterion was to ensure the importance of the quality by its frequent mention; the purpose of the second, to ensure that it was a concept shared by all actors in the classroom situation ; and the purpose of the third, to ensure that the concept was not idiosyncratic to a particular instructor's set of standards.

20. For inclusion in columns one and three, the capitalized words (or their synonyms in parentheses) had to meet the same three criteria described above (see Note 19). The only exceptions appear in quotation maks : "art as therapy" and "art as masturbation." These were phrases, used only once apiece, which referred to qualities commonly recognized and condemned in art classroms for which no precise one-word equivalent seemed to be in usage. The single exception to the two-pejorative rule was the quality of "interest;" there is apparently no such things as an art object which is "too interesting."

21. At the most extreme pole, of course, absence of innovation at a group level becomes plagiarism. So little is unique about the object that it may be considered a copy of another's work. When individual authorship of such an object is claimed, the issue is no longer abrogation of an aesthetic standard, but rather of an ethical one.

22. Deliberate omission of emotional tone-- as in, for example much of pop art-- may still be construed as expressive : something of the producer's feelings is revealed, if only their repression or negation. Refusal to convey an affective stance in a work is quite a different thing from failure to convey an affective stance.

23. A deliberate lack of craftsmanship (in the traditional sense) is sometimes integral to what the artist hopes to achieve, thus constituting "appropriate" means; consider, for example, the recent "random art" and, at least to some extent, the "action painting" of the 1950's.

24. Students also came to perceive their teachers' expectations as focusing more on personal qualities than on work-related qualities, as their time in the training setting increased (see Field, *op. cit*). The two movements seem to complement one another; as students come to feel that they are being judged in a more "personal" way, they also come to feel that the quality of their work is being judged by more "personal" standards. Just as there was variation between settings in the *degree* to

which attitude-centered criteria were inculcated, so too was there variation in the *degree* to which personal qualities came to be viewed as the focus of teachers' expectations.

25. When asked what they thought their teacher considered a "good" work of art to be, four of the sixteen art school students (25 per cent) said "abstract expressionism" in the course of their replies, No students at the art department or art club did so.
26. For a more detailed account, see Field, *op. cit.*
27. Both professional graduates and current students from the art club emphasized "curriculum" as pivotal ; professionals and students from the art school and art department emphasized "teachers."
28. Some anthropological studies have given attention to the attitudinal components of artists' aesthetic judgments; see. *e g.*, Ruth L. Bunzel, *The Pueblo Potter* (New York, 1928); Paul Bohannon, "Artist and Critic in an African Society" in *The Artist in Tribal Society*, ed. Marian W. Smith (London, 1961); and Robert Thompson, "Abatan: A Master Potter of the Egbado Yoruba" in *Tradition and Creativity in Tribal Art*, ed. Daniel P. Biebuyck (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).
29. Alan P. Merriam, "The Bala Musician" in The Traditional Artist in African Societies, ed. Warren L. d'Azevedo (Bloomington and London, 1973).
30. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
31. *Idem.*
32. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
33. See Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns (eds.), *Philosophies of Art and Beauty*, (New York, 1964), pp. 239-241.
34. Michael Sullivan, *A Short History of Chinese Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967).
35. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Transformation of Nature in art* (New York, 1934).
36. Renè Guènon, "Initiation and the Crafts" (pamphlet), (Ipswich, 1974).
37. James W. Fernandez, "principles of Opposition and Vitality Fang Aesthetics" in *Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies*, ed. Carol F. Jopling (New York, 1971), p. 373.
38. Robert Farris Thompson, "Yoruba Artistic Criticism" in *The Traditional Artist in African Societies*, ed. Warren L. d'Azevedo (Bloominghton and London, 1973), p. 32.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
40. Adrian A. Gerbrands, "Art As an Element of Culture in Africa" in *Anthropology and Art*, ed. Charlotte M. Otten (Garden City, 1971), p. 380.
41. Apparent exceptions, such as the Japanese cultivation of *asymmetry* as an aesthetic property, may represent just such a different conception of

the "mean;" and there is evidence that they, too, are governed by emic definitions of "too much" and "not enough" (see Kakuzo Okakura, *The Book of Tea*, New York, 1964.)

42. Gerbrands, *loc. cit.*
43. See Okakura, *op. cit.*, *passim.*
44. See. *e. g.*, Daniel P. Biebuyck, "Introduction," and William Bascom, "Creativity and Style in African Art" in *Tradition and Creativity in Tribal Art*, ed. Daniel P. Biebuyck (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), and Frederick J. Dockstader, "The Role of the Individual Indian Artist" in *Primitive Art and Society*, ed. Anthony Forge (London and New York, 1973).
45. Daniel J. Crowley, "An African Aesthetic" in *Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies*, ed. Carol F. Jopling (New York, 1971), p. 325.
46. Warner Muesterberger, "Roots of Primitive Art" in *Anthropology and Art*, ed. Charlotte M. Otten (Garden City, 1971); Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture" in *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, 1963).
47. See F. D. Klingender, *Art and Industrial Revolution* (New York, 1968); Richard Miller, *Bohemia: The Protoculture Then and Now* (Chicago, 1977).
48. Lord has argued that the institutional theory of the aesthetic *precludes* innovation as an aesthetic goal, equating "convention" with "repetition" (Catherine Lord, "Convention and Dickie's Institutional Theory of Art," in *British Journal of Aesthetics* 20. 1980, pp. 322-328). Her point of view is cogently refuted by Peggy Zeglin Brand, "Lord, Lewis, and the Institutional Theory of Art," *Journal of Aethetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 40, No, 3 (1982), pp. 309-314.
49. Maquet, op. cit. :Warren L. d'Azevedo, "A Structural Approch to Aesthetics" in *American Anthropologist* 60 (1958), pp. 702-713,
50. Andrè Malraux. *Museum Without Walls* (London, 1967).

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Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol.VII : Nos. 1 - 2 : 1984
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Literary Response and the Concept of Criticism

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What do we talk about when we talk about literary response, and what implications does the notion of literary response have for the concept of criticism ? I want to discuss these two questions, and examine, clarify, and rethink certain considerations that are taken for granted in talk about literary response. These considerations include the familiar dichotomy between subjective and objective meanings or response and its various corollaries occurring in the form of such notions as the objectivity of a text in opposition to the subjectivity of a response. This dichotomy is in part the product of a distinction between fact and value, and in the context of criticism results at times in debates concerning the place of emotion in literary response.

Wimsatt and Beardsley's arguments about what they called the affective fallacy, and stanley Fish's arguments against the Wimsatt—Beardsley position are too well known to need any retracing here. [1] The grounds for their opposition, however, need to be characterized, in order to show not simply how the dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity is crucial to their dispute, but also that the notions of objectivity and subjectivity possess an ambiguity which poses difficulties for any account of criticism given in terms of either notion, "The Affective Fallacy," on Wimsatt and Beardsley's view, "is a confusion

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between the poem and its results It begins by trying to derive the students of criticism from the psychological effects of a poem and ends in impressionism and relativism." [2] Wimsatt and Beardsley have in mind the whole history of affective theories from Plato and Longinus to I. A. Richards, a history that shows its various theorists holding different and at times conflicting conceptions of an affective response. Wimsatt and Beardsley are not opposed to the idea of there being a play of emotions and feelings called forth by literary works ; they are rather concerned with the need for a sense of order in the emotions, Emotions aroused by literary works are structured, as Hegel and Bosanquet would put it ; [3] they aren't just any feelings and twitches one might experience on the occasion of reading a literari work. In other words, not all emotions and feelings allegedly aroused by the work are integral to the structure of the work. Thus the emotions that cohere with the total structure of values and meanings in the work constitute a legitimate object of literary criticism. Emotions, iusofar as one can talk about them, must be organically conceived in the sense that they possess a cartain objectivity essentially attributable to the work of art. Wimsatt and Beardsley thus distinguish between the so-called effects one may experience when responding to the work and the poem, and the reason for this distinction is that effects tend to be contingent, subject to the accident of circumstance. What is intrinsic to the work, then, cannot be characterized as effects. A serious pursuit of effects will, on their view. make responsible criticism impossible. Hence, they argue, the critcism that refuses to distinguish betwen a literary work from its presumed effects commits a logical fallacy.

Stanley Fish has, in his head—on conflict with the Wimsatt—Beardsleyp osition, argued that an accurate description of the meaning of a poem cannot be given except in terms of all of the possible effects experienced by a reader, and that a poem is the result of all the effects taking place in thc reader's mind.[4] The view already contains a twofold provocative idea which Fish did not then draw out : the idea that the distinction between literature and criticism is spurious, and that readers are the makers of poems.[5] It is this idea which throws out the whole Plato—Aristotle matrix within which much of the theorizing about criticism has proceeded.

Fish calls the "affective fallacy" itself a fallacy,[6] and in doing that he employs the form of logical thinking which is the same as that employed by Wimsatt and Beardsley. The latter attempt to fix the logic of criticism by recognizing certain porcedures as legitimate ones. and by rejecting certain others as illegitimate, confusing, and finally inimical to what they believe is the right form of the concept of criticism. Fish prestions precisely this idea

that Wimsatt and Beardsley provide such a form. It is exactly at this level of the conflict between these two positions that an analysis of the idea of literary response and its relation to the concept of criticism seems to me to become interesting. The centrality given to affective response leads to a fallacy only if one holds a concept of criticism that denies legitimacy to "affects" in the act of reading. But if one considers them integral to the act, then it is not simply legitimate to consider them, it is *necessary* to give them a place of centrality. From this perspective, one which Fish would seem to adopt, the "affective fallacy" is itself a species of fallacy. Rejection or admission of "affects" is a fallacy from particular critical perspectives ; if and only if one could convincingly fix the logic of criticism could one decide once and for all whether "affects" are, on so-called logical grounds, legitimate or illegitimate.

Wimsatt and Beardsley excluded "affects" for ensuring objectivity in criticism. whereas Fish, in his countermove, requires them for ensuring subjectivity. Both answers to the question, what constitutes legitimate literary response, are formulated in terms of the traditional dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity. Fish seems to me to undermine his own claim by arguing that a particular pattern of responses occurs when readers read words on a page. "Essentially what the method does is slow down the reading experience so that 'events' one does not notice in normal time, but which do occur, are brought before our analytical attention." [7] The claim, this is what happens at the moment of reading, not only rejects other subjectivist response and strategies as impossible, it also reifies a certain seructure of happening in the mind. Fish has admitted some of the difficulties that attend his view, and modified it by appealing to the notion of interpretive communities.[8] Wimsatt and Beardsley, on the other hand, construe the objectivity of the literary work on the model of the phyaical object, though Wimsatt himself later qualified it by characterizing the literary object as only analogically similar to the physical object. Their primary concern is to account for the experience of unity and complexity (in Coleridge's famous phrase, "unity in multeity") made possible by the literary work.

The fact, however, that at least some of the criticism leveled against both positions on the nature and status of both literary criticism and the literary object is unquestionable, ought to enable us to question the notion of literary response conceived in terms of the traditional dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity. For it is interesting that when reader—response theorists criticize each other by asking whether the reader is still constrained by the text, or granted partial or total autonomy, they remain trapped by the traditional definitions of objectivity and subjectivity, and the opposition enshrined in

those definitions.9 The objectivist believes that it is possible to be free of all assumptions, except for ones pertinent to the very nature of the literary work, whereas the subjectivist believes that one's assumptions are formative of one's experience and hence that there can be nothing questionable about them.10 This dichotomy springs in part from two different and false conceptions about the nature of assumptions and its relation to literary response.

If objectivity in criticism means knowing a set of objective facts about literature and its history which will help bring about consensus in the critical community, then the objectivity so attained is uninteresting and unimportant to what is vital in criticism. If, on the other hand, it means gaining a clarification of the structure of values which constitute crucial features of one's experience of literature, then it is of course not only desirable but important to serious discussion in criticism. Conceived in this way, the idea of objectivity avoids the false dichotomy of objectivity and subjectivity, one which prompts scientrtically inclined theorists and critics to condemn subjectivity, and prompts psychologicrlly and sometimes phenomenologically inclined theorists to castigate objectivity. The sort of objectivity to be sought for in literary understanding is one that will help us avoid the self-deception which inheres in believing that the act of reading a literary work necessarily gives us an insight into our own selves. This, incidentally, is an illusion often provided and sustained by psychoanalysis. The latter, however, can help us develop a capacity for self—reflection, but as often as not it can also fortify the complacent pursuit of grati-fications in the name of radical individualism. If, in criticism conceived on the model of ego psychology and its later versions, one's so—called subjectivity determines what one experiences in literature, then criticism becomes simply the self's *capacity* to replay endlessly its own experiences. This capacity, however, is a *tendency*, a *symptom*, as much in need of critical diagnosis as the model which legitimizes in advance the inevitability of that tendency.

A strict commitment to objectivity which hopes to settle the conflict on every important aspect of criticism requires that we succeed in finding sufficient common ground among all who disagree to arrive at a consensual understanding of a literary work. To expect this is to expect that there is some final universal method of literary inquiry, But we need to get rid of such an expectation, and recognize that our conceptual or categorial structures are historical, that even if some of them continue to persist beyond their contexts of origin, they nevertheless alter and undergo a process of internal modification and refinement, Such a recognition thereatens that conception of rationality which seeks

universal conditions of agreement, or, to put it in Kantian terms, "the conditions of possibility of experience." [11] It is a rigid conception of objectivity which has led to its equally rigid logical counterpart, subjectivity.

Subjectivism in literary criticism and its theory can be taken as an extension of emotivism in modern moral philosophy, and of ego—psychology in psychoanalysis.[12] Literary response, on this view, is the expression of one's personal feelings and attitudes, and one describes them in arder to change the feelings and attitudes of others. This implies that there are no objective criteria, indeed that there can be no intelligible appeal to objective criteria. Once it is said that criteria of criticism are subjective, all interpretations and all evaluations become non—rational, in the sense that not only that they cannot be settled by reason, but that there connot be any serious dialogue and conflict between different parties, All disputes would then be carried on either by clever manipulations of opponents, or, political and institutional contexts permitting, by overt ar covert violence. It is this conception of the valuational dimension underlying criticism and its theories that leads some theorists to charaterize someone's questioning of a particular theory or practice as a matter of his not liking it, and the acceptance of a theory or practice as a matter of liking it. This conception blinds its adherents to what is important, or questionable, in particular theories and the forms of practice envisaged by them. My discussion does not mean, however, that, for a variety of institutional and other reasons, subjectivist criticism and its theory may not acquire great influence in a given culture. (What the nature of that influece is, and what historical forces contribute to the rise of such a conception, are questions that require an historical—analytical inquiry, one that would have to be both interdisciplinary and critically self—conscious about the disciplines it considers important to grasp,)

The idea of a mistake, confusion, error, or failure of tact makes on sense whatever in a context in which literary response is strictly a play of one's subjective response, Consequently, just as an error or confusion cannot be eliminated, neither can it be made. Such a mode of arguing construes a radically strange and csnfused form of epistemology. It harbors the fear and anxiety that if the conept of a confusion were to be given a legitimate place in one's inquiry, it would make one dogmatic and authoritarian. This annxiety is in itself a product of confusion, especially since its denial. implicit or explicit, itself breeds a dogmatic and authoritarian stance in critical practice. The subjectivist critic seems to be afraid that if it is allowed that critical practice can

at least partly be explicated in terms of reasons, criticism may be driven to draw certain dogmatic and coercive conclusions when faced with requisite evidence and argument, that the possibility of providing critical practice with explicit and defensible criteria might amount to a critical authoritarianism barely able to disguise its coercive power. But there is no reason to credit such anxieties. The specter of authoritarianism can be just as dangerous in a so-called radical stance as in a so-called conservative stance, if it is not able to engage a process of argument and self-criticism, and issues, instead, in bland assertions which are then taken to be themselves critical arguments.

Self-deception, wilful stubbornness, fanaticism, and perversity can mark any discipline of cultural inquiry, in the guise of traditionalism as well as radicalism, and they can hamper criticism and its theory in both rigidly subjectivist and rigidly objectivist approaches. When a theorist takes a strictly subjectivist stance according to which there is nothing objectively questionable about such a stance, one is faced with the unavoidable implication that there is nothing objectively questionable about the uniquely personol which characterizes everything in one's critical practice. Such theorists sometimes adduce the example of romanticism and its insistence on individuality and self-exploration. Romanticism, however, derives its power in part against the background of certain univesal commonplaces of the predecessor culture which would have considered at least some of romonticism's cantral claims suspect, if not unintelligible. Nevertheless, romanticism's interest in the self does not make it subjectivist ; indeed, like phenomenology, romanticism's interest in the self derives its strength from its exploration of inter-subjectivity.

The privileging of a subjectivist stance occurs partly because of its proponent's conviction that there is no possibility of knowledge except in terms of strictly subjectivist construals of all experience. This conviction has its logical corollary in the fact that for the subjectivist the problem of ignorance does not even arise. But to say that there can be critical knowledge of literature and that it cannot intelligibly be called subjectivist in any strict sense is to say that it is possible to invite reflection on our critical practice by those who do not and need not share all or any particular features of our experience. This kind of reflection is rendered impossible when critical practice is canceived as the logical consequence of holding certain assumptions in such a manner that no one who does not either follow or adopt that procedure can possibly understand what is being attempted in that practice. This, incidentally, is the subjectivism which is conceptually invidious. As against this stance, a

commitment to objectivity (as redefined here) entails not that everyone shall follow or adopt the same procedures or assumptions, but that whatever responses are elaborated in one's critical practice allow in principle for analysis and reflection.

Fish has, in his later essays, sought to eliminate the subject-object dichotomy. "Problems disappear," he provocatively says, "not because they have been solved but because they are shown never to have been problems in the first place." [13] He dissolves the dichotomy by devising a notion of literary communities. The dissolution, however, is not genuine, since it generalizes the individualistically defined notion of the subject into a communal notion and thus manages at best to avoid or dissolve the problem of the object. On Fish's view, literary communities, since they make literary works, need face no real difficulties other than the one experienced in the process of making them, and the difficulties thus experienced become testimonies to the formative capacity of a given literary community. Fish characterizes his method as a persuasion model which directs our attention away from the demonstration model which, he argues, is based on the subject-object dichotomy. If all of what we do is guided by a specific set of assumptions which determines in advance the way we make poems and this strategy helps us celebrate our formative capacities, Fish can then draw the conclusion that "the greatest gain that falls to us under a persuasion model is a greatly enhanced sense of the importance if our activities." [14]

This argument may well appear like a liberation of the self from the clutches of an emotivist philosophy but it cannot escape the implication that it carves up the institution of criticism into emotivist communities, each pursing its various gratifications without any sense of doubt its activities. The concept of criticism, however, is a highly complex and sophisticated one, in part because it includes, as a crucial element of its self-description, criticism's ability to raise fundamental and sometimes skeptical questions about both its present status and the nature and limits of the self-understanding of particular theories and practices of criticism. Moreover, one can always raise questions of adequacy, legitimacy, and usefulness of a particular response or assumptions ; and though these questions are often in traditional philosophy of science and criticism tied to realist epistemology which requires the subject-objet dichotomy, they do not require that epistemology and its various assumptions.[15]

Freed from realistic epistemology and the correspondence theories of truth and knowledge, the concept of objectivity implies the denial of any

position that holds that the content and form of what one is going to say or do in response to a literary work are already fixed by the assumptions one employs to initiate one's response.[16] Assumptions are, of course, constitutive, but constitutive assumptions are the ones that underlie the total confiiguration of a literary interpretation, and not the ones that help initiate a critical response. When assumptions are taken to decide a reading from its very beginning, they become, rather then assumptions, a method that strictly decides what is, and what is not, legitimate in a reading. Taken in this way, even apparently spohisticated assumptions which seem to allow for a process of fulfillment and thwarting of expectations are not distinguishable from a methodical machine. Though they may seem useful for pedagogical purposes, they cannot serve the interests of criticism. But this may imply that in literary studies the problem of pedagogy remains an unresolved one for those who have come to recognize the practice of criticism as something radically distinct from that which follows from the imposition of a method,

We need to acknowledge that there is such a thing as critical (literary) knowledge, in the epistemological sense of these words. We misinterpret the epistemological sense when we hope for a formalization of literary knowledge in the way in which the natural sciences seek to formalize their procedures and discoveries. All those who read literature and write about it possess some literary knowledge and understanding ; they could not be said to engage in critical controversies if they did not claim such knowledge. But when we ask, as both Plato and I. A. Richards did, whether we can make knowledg-claims about literature, we may be in the grip of a scientistic and false conception of knowledge. Nevertheless, the question about the nature and meaning of knowledge-claims made for literature is in itself a legitimate question; it is, as Wittgenstein might explain, a question about the grammar of literary understanding. Similarly, there is nothing as auch wrong or auth-oritarian about one's conviction that some interpretations are simply sbsurd and some quite interesting and right. The vocabulary of right and wrong, however. is a problematical one, since it may tempt one to think that one can discover absolute grounds for adjudication among different interpretations, and that there is a "proper'. method of doing interpretations which will put to rest the conflict among critics.

Now, the subjectivist stance is generally the product of an attitude that it represents the sincere and satisfactory mode of access to one's *felt* response. But it is not clear why felt response should make a literary reading subjectivist

as such. It can be construed as subjectivist only by insisting that the expression of a feeling or attitude is part of the essence of a literary reading, which cannot properly be done by objective criteria. This, however, misconstrues the very concept of literary response and its relation to the concept of criticism which is essentially institutional, The concern with a sophisticated concept of objectivity requires in fact that the expression of a feeling or attitude be taken to be integral to the practice of criticism.

If the subjectivist sometimes identifies a literary interpretation with the articulation of feelings and emotions, the objectivist construes the connection between a literary reading and feelings to be no more than external. It is here that serious theoretical reflection needs to assemble, as Wittgenstein would say, reminders that bring out the fuller and more complex situation underlying the concept of criticism. [17] This concept covers a rather large and complex spectrum, and extends from fleeting emotions one may experience by a reading of a moving lyric on love or loss to the deepest disturbances one may experience on reading *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, or *The Brothers Karamazov*. Great literary works such as *Hamlet* or *Oedipus Rex*, too, induce fleeting emotional states in one, as do some fine lyrics, but what constitutes the power of *Hamlet* resides in part in the deep affective disturbances it induces, disturbances which can sometimes alter our very perception of our personal and social existence. The idea of affective impact is trivialized when it is confined to contingent emotional states; this is a tendency of the aesthetic of detachment.[18] And it is trivialized when it is confined to some pattern of fulfillment and thwarting of expectations; this is a tendency of the aesthetic of involvement whose modern manifestation occurs in the reader-response theory in its subjectivist version. If the subjectivist is severely partial and therefore in error because he has accepted some pattern of fluctuations presumed to occur in the mind as totally determining literary response. the objectivist is severely partial and therefore in error because he leaves no room for a consideration of the meaning and implications of feelings and attitudes in literary response.

The involvement of emotions in literary response does not render the response incapable of reasoned elaboration, any more than the fact that the events of history are often emotionally charged makes them immune to analysis and reflection. In literary response, emotions can be directly involved, especially when a literary work deals with human action and its implications for life in particular social-historical contexts. When emotions become involved in literary response in this manner, they make central to their grasp the ideas of morality and

truth, without thereby making the response anything other, or less, than literary, response. then, is literary not in the sense of response to merely the formal properties of a litererary work, but in the composite sense of its capacity to work toward a grasp of the work's structure and meaning.

Literary criticism doesn't, and in fact must not, fulfil a single function. It can, or ought to, focus on a whole multiplicity of functions: it can reflect on human relations, on the gulf between values and conduct in social and personal life, and on the kinds of things that constitute obstacles to a satisfactory realization of the projects by which human beings seek to define themselves and their world, and are often in defined by their world and its possibilities and limits. The concept of criticism comprehends a more complex range of procedures and insights for dealing with literature, and it cannot be equated, without severe impoverishment, with any strategy of analyzing writing or language as such. This does not mean that such a strategy may not have a bearing on criticism. But if it claims to be applicable to any literary work and hence generalizes itself as a strategy of literary interpretation, it misdescribes its role; it cannot be anything more than, a useful, even important, element in the act of criticism. The concept of criticism allows in principle for shifts in interpretative strategies, and it encompasses a host of other elements that require an analysis of formal, historical, and conceptual issues that arise in any act of criticism which sees itself as something more than the reading of a text.

Notes and References

1. W. K. Wimsatt, Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Affective Fallacy," in Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, Ky., 1954), pp, 21-39; Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class ? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980). pp. 22-67,
2. Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Affective Fallacy," p. 21.
3. See G. W. F. Hegel. *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. F. P. B. Osmaston (London, 1920), I: pp. 67-78; and Bernard Bosanquet, *Three Lectures on Aesthetics* (London, 1915), p. 19.
4. Fish, *Is There a Text*, p. 43.
5. Fish seems to suggest this idea in his later essays in *Is There a Text*, see esp. part II, pp. 303-71.
6. Fish, *Is There a Text*, p. 42.

7. Fish, *Is There a Text*, p. 28.
8. Fish develops the notion of interpretive communities to overcome the difficulties he acknowledges in his position; for "interpretive communities," see *Is There a Text*, pp. 167-80. For Fish's admission of the difficulties, see his introductory chapter in *Is There a Text*, pp. 1-17 and the parenthetical note, pp. 147-48, to chapter 6.
9. See, for instance, Fish's criticism of Michael Riffaterre, *Is There a Text*, pp. 59-65.
10. The question of literary response has at times been discussed in terms of subjective and objective paradigms. See, for instance, Norman N. Holland, "The New Paradigm: Subjective or Transactive ?" *New Literary History* 7 (winter 1976): 335-46; David Bleich, *Subjective criticism* (Baltimore and London, 1978) ; and Grant Webster, *The Republic of Letters: A History of Postwar American Literary Opinion* (Baltimore and London, 1979).
11. In our time Karl-Otto Apel and Jurgen Habermas have made major attempts to revise and defend this Kantian notion. See, for instance, Apel, *Analytic Philosophy of Language and the Geisteswissenschaften* (Dordrecht, 1967); and *Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston, 1971.
12. See, for instance, C. L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven, 1945).
13. Fish, *Is There a Text*, pp. 336-37.
14. Fish, *Is There a Text*, p. 368.
15. For a discussion of these and related issues, see Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, N. J. , 1979), chapters VI and VII.
16. For a full treatment of the nature of assumptions in the context of hermeneutics, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York, 1975), a translation of Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tubingen, 1960); pp. 245-341.
17. Assembling reminders would in a sense amount to a grasp of the grammar of literary understanding. In Wittgenstein, the notions of assumbling reminders and what constitutes the grammatical are extremely difficult, allowing for no straightjacket applications. See, for instance. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (London, 1958), pp. 217, 253, 371, 373,
18. For a discussion of this stance, see my *Metacriticism* (Athens, Ga. , 1981). pp. 88-100.

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Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol.VII : Nos. 1 - 2 : 1984
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Eliot and Ruskin

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I

T. S. Eliot wrote surprisingly little on Ruskin. Among the exceedingly numerous literary and cultural figures to whom Eliot devoted an essay or a significant part thereof, Ruskin cannot be found. There is no mention of him in D. Gallup's revised and extended bibliography of Eliot's writings.[1] Nor is Ruskin listed in Martin's bibliography of criticism on Eliot.[2] And if we consult the index to Eliot's *Selected Essays*, we find only occasional references to Ruskin, where he is cited mainly as a prose stylist rather than discussed in terms of his views on literature and society, subjects vitally central to Eliot.[3]

Eliot's lack of serious attention to Ruskin is, then, sufficiently evident; but why should one find it surprising ? Surely even so prolific a writer as Eliot need not write about every literary figure of importance. However, Eliot's inattention to Ruskin seems more unusual when we recall that Ruskin was a powerful influence on the two universities which educated and molded Eliot: Harvard and Oxford.[4] Secondly, Ruskin was not only the most important critic of plastic art in the Victorian age that formed the background for Eliot's modernist revolt. but he was also a notable literary critic and, moreover, an extremely influential and controversial social and cultural theorist.[5] Like Matthew Arnold (whom Eliot treats extensively and more or less regards as a spiritual progenitor).[6] and indeed like Eliot himself, Ruskin grew to recognize the importance of the social and

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cultural conditions in which the cherished phenomenon of art was created and appreciated, and he thus devoted much of his later writings to social and cultural criticism.

Thirdly, again like Eliot (and Arnold), Ruskin was an ardent admirer of European (versus insularly English) culture; and sought to revive and improve the aesthetic achievement of England through the introduction of continental ideas and models. As Ruskin was inspired by Venice, so Eliot later looked to Dante. Furthermore, Eliot implicitly admits that his own prose style detives from that of Ruskin: for he defines Pater's style an deriving from Ruskin's and as greatly influencing F. H. Bradley's, which Eliot confessed to be the formative influence on "my own prose syle."[7] Finally, there seem to be several interesting parallels in the personal lives and personalities of Eliot and Ruskin. Both came from strict Puritan homes, a fact which not only influenced their writings but also apparently led to serious problems with sexuality and to extremely unhappy marriages which quickly ended in separation. Both rebelled from Puritanism to a more worldly view of life, and then to a religious outlook closer to Catholicism.[8] We have already noted their parallel theoretic development from concern with problems of art to concern with problems of society and culture.

These facts show that Eliot was undoubtedly exposed to Ruskin and could have found him a kindred spirit in some respects. But is there anything more substantial between Ruskin and Eliot than these general similarities ? Is there any specific and significant core of critical doctrine shared by them which would support the possibility of an unacknowledged influence of Ruskin on Eliot ? In this essay I shall try to demonstrate that there is such community of doctrine, and that Ruskin's literary criticism clearly and explicitly presents several of the major poetic tenets that Eliot advocated and helped make famous.

To make my case for community of doctrine more difficult, and yet all the more convincing, I shall not avail myself of all of Ruskin's critical writings, which indeed comprise a vast variety of ideas and, alas, many apparent contradictions. I shall rather confine myself almost entirely to one short piece of literary criticism taken from Ruskin's *Modern Painters*. It is the essay "Of the Pathetic Fallacy."[9] probably Ruskin's most famous and widely anthologized piece of literary criticism, and one which could not have been unfamiliar to Eliot as a young critic. Let us then consider the major critical doctrines on poetry that Ruskin's essay expresses, and see how they are echoed and applied in Eliot's criticism, particularly his earlier 'revolutionary' criticism which remains his most powerful and influential.[10]

Some of these doctrines are intimately interrelated and difficult to isolate from each other for discussion. But this only makes them constitute a more coherent and powerful critical position, whose being shared by two critics would indicate a substantially similar critical outlook, a shared poetic.

II

1. The first important doctrine that we shall single out in Ruskin's essay is the critical standard of truth and precision in poetry. For Ruskin, truth and accuracy were a crucial criterion of excellence in poetry; and therefore the motivating task in "Of the Pathetic Fallacy" is to explain how we nevertheless frequently find beauty and pleasure in false poetic descriptions, e. g. , in descriptions like "the cruel, crawling foam," when the sea's foam in actual fact is neither cruel nor crawling. "It is an important question. For, throughout our past reasonings about art, we have always found that nothing could be good, or useful, or ultimately pleasurable, which was untrue. But here is something pleasurable in written poetry which is nevertheless *un*true. "(*PF*, 381).

Ruskin's solution to the problem is that such fallacies or inaccuracies in poetry are only enjoyable when they are justified by or *true to* the dramatic circumstances and feelings of the poetic persona uttering them.

> All violent feelings .. produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would call the 'Pathetic Fallacy'. Now so long as we see that the *feeling* is true, we pardon, or are even pleassed by the confused fallacy of sight which it induces ; we are pleased, for instance, with those lines of Kingsley's above quoted, not because they fallaciously describe foam, but because they faithfully describe sorrow." (*PF*, 382, 387-8)

Ruskin thus can conclude that even in these apparently problematic cases of successful poetic fallacy, truth remains an essential standard of poetic excellence, for "the spirit of truth must guide us in some sort, even in our enjoyment of fallacy',. (*PF*, 385)

We shall further consider Ruskin's solution to the athetic allacy when we discuss Eliot's doctrine of the "objective correlative". But at this point it is important to note that not only can such fallacy of description be justified only in terms of another truth (truth to feeling); but that even when it is so justified, it is still regarded by Ruskin as essentially inferior to true and accurate description. For Ruskin, it "is only the second order of poets who much delight in it"

(*PF*, 382), while poets of the first rank largely eschew it. The truly great poet is rather "the man who perceives rightly in spite of his feelings" (*PF*,385), one who even in intense emotion is able "to keep his eyes firmly fixed on the *pure fact*" and express it with clarity and precision. (*PF*, 388-9)

For, indeed, central to Ruskins standard of truth is the demand for clarity, and precision in poetic perception and description. Thus, Ruskin praises certain expressions and images (e. g. , of waves) for being "severe and accurate", distinct and visually "definite", so that "there is no mistaking the kind of wave meant, nor missing the sight of it." (*PF*, 388-9) He similarly praises Dante's "clear perception" and accurate expression (*PF*, 383, 387), but is contrastingly critical of "the inaccurate and vague state of perception" which makes language "broken, obscure, and wild" and which can only be condoned when induced by divine or prophetic inspiration. (*PF*, 386) Moreover, if we momentarily transcend the confines of Ruskin's essay and consider his contrast of Milton and Dante, we again find him advocating the same themes of clarity, visual definiteness, and precision. Milton is censured for the lack of visuality in his portrayal of Satan, whose "form is never distinct enough to be painted", while Dante is praised because he "will not leave even external forms obscure."[11]

Eliot's famous criticism of Milton and praise of Dante could not have been more clearly adumbrated. His attack that Milton lacks "visual imagination" and that Milton's images and expressions are vague, unclear, and give no "sense of particularity" or definiteness (*SP*, 259-60): and his contrasting praise of Dante for "*clear visual images*" and lucidity of expression (*SP*, 2o7, 209-13) seem virtual echoes of Ruskin's remarks. Whether or not Eliot actually derived these views from Ruskin, true and accurate observation and clear and definite expression were central tenets of Eliot's poetics, frequently applied as critical standards.

Thus, in Eliot, not only is Dante praised for lucidity and precision, but the metaphysical poets are praised for their "fidelity to thought and feeling" (*SP*, 62 ; and Blake is praised for his uncompromising truth and honesty, "an honesty against which the whole world conspires, because it is unpleasant." (*SW*, 151) For Eliot, as for Ruskin, accuracy and truth of Perception is vitally connected with precision of expression, and thus Blake is also praised for his "exact statement". (*SW*, 154) Indeed, throughout Eliot's early criticism the value of clarity. definiteness, and precision in poetry is ardently advocated. Shakespeare's superiority over Massinger is largely explained as that of "precise vigour" and "the particular image" over "the general forensic statement" (*SW*, 126) Eliot similarly argues for the superiority of Herbert over Vaughan. and

Marvell over Morris in terms of the superiority of clarity and precision over mistiness and vagueness;[12] and he likewise commends Pound's verse because "it is always definite and concrete" (*TCTC*, 170) Thus, the poetic goal of truth and accuracy, and the concomitant values of clarity, definiteness, and precision were shared and championed by both Ruskin and Eliot.

2, Closely connected with the criterion of truth in Ruskin's treatment of the pathetic fallacy is the notion of the fidelity or truth of emotions to the facts and circumstances described in the poem. For Ruskin, passion and emotion in poetry (and consequently also the errors of perception that they induce) could only be justified by "the facts" of the poem, i. e. , the actions, events, and states of affairs with which it is concerned and which it describes. We remarked earlier that Ruskin could tolerate fallacious description when it was caused by and reflected truth of feeling, when the kind and intensity of feeling seemed strong enough to justify distortion of perception. Otherwise, such inaccuracy gives no pleasure and is simply unacceptable. The pathetic fallacy thus "is right or wrong according to the genuineness of the emotion from which it springs; always, however, implying necessarily *some* degree of weakness in the character." (*PF*, 395)

But how do we determine *when* there is truth or genuineness of feeling, and hence justification for the pathetic fallacy ? Ruskin's answer is that feeling is genuine only when it is justified by and commensurate with the dramatic circumstances or facts of the poem; only when the "emotion has a worthy cause (is it) true and right." (*PF*, 394) Thus Ruskin condemns Pope's overly elegant translation of a passage of Homer for containing metaphorical fallacies that are unjustified because "they are put into the mouth of the wrong passion—a passion which never could have possibly spoken them— agonized curiosity. Ulysses wants to know the facts of the matter; and the very last thing his mind could do at the moment would be to pause, or suggest in anywise what was *not* a fact", by playing with fanciful metaphors. (*PF*, 384) But, on the other hand, Ruskin justifies agonized grief and its distorted perception of the sea's foam as cruel and crawling, when this springs from a true or proportionate cause, such as the death of a loved one.

Hence, for Ruskin, intense feeling is only true and noble (and its consequent distortion of perception only acceptable) "when it is justified by the strength of its cause"; it is false and "ignoble when there is not cause enough for it". (*PF*, 393) Indeed, it seems that for Ruskin, the best or most authentic way of evoking emotion in poetry is not by direct and ardent emotional expression, but rather by simply and

strictly presenting "the external facts" and circumstances which generate the emotion. Thus, "it is one of the signs of the highest power in a writer .. to keep his eyes fixed firmly on the *pure fact*, out of which if any feeling comes to him or his reader, he knows it must be a true one." (*PF*, 388)

Ruskin's doctrine of authenticity and fidelity of poetic emotion to "the external facts" or dramatic circumstances which cause it should readily be recognized as a clear prefiguration of Eliot's famous theory of the "objective correlative", which he presents in his essay on *Hamlet*. Here too there is the insistence that emotion in art must be commensurate to the facts and circumstances presented in the artwork, and that it is best expressed not by emotive outburst but rather by presenting those facts, circumstances, and objects which themselves evoke this emotion in the artist and should do likewise in his reader.

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of evants which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. If you examine any of shakespeare's most successful tragedies, you will find this exact equivalence The artistic 'inevitability' lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion; and this is precisely what is deficient in *Hamlet*. Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear. (*SP*, 48)

The similarity of Eliot's theory to Ruskin's is both evident and striking; the very same points are being made and in much the same language. But such similarity, it must be cautioned, is not proof that Ruskin was the major source of Eliot's theory of the objective correlative, though it does indicate the possibility of an unacknowledged Ruskinian influence on the theory.

3. In Ruskin's "Of the Pathetic Fallacy" one can point to a third important critical doctrine, which is closely related yet, I think, distinguishable from the one we have just discussed concerning the necessity of poetic emotion being commensurate to and justified and expressed by the external facts or objects represented in the poem. This third doctrine is rather the more general tenet that the poet should strictly set down or present the facts rather than comment on them. He should show rather than interpret, record rather than ruminate or moralize. This tenet of course reinforces the second doctrine, that emotion should be evoked by presentation of fact rather than by emotive

gushing, but it goes further to exclude general moralizing and reflection as well. The poet's job, then, according to Ruskin, is to record or present, not to ruminate or preach. Most of the latter part of Ruskin's essay is devoted to demonstrating this doctrine through the aid of several poems from which he quotes liberally, the goal being "to show the peculiar dignity possessed by all passages which thus limit their expression to the pure fact, and leave the hearer to gather what he can from it. (*PF*, 390)

He extols, for example, Casimir de la Vigne's ballad, *La Toilette de Constance* (from which he brings a quotation of six stanzas), for the stark and noble power achieved through its strict adherence to portraying only the facts of the tragic story without moralizing or sentimentalizing about them. The ballad's excellence and power is shown to be the result of its telling the reader in effect.

> Yes, that is the fact of it. Right or wrong, the poet does does not say. What you may think about it, he does not know. He has nothing to do with that. There lie the ashes of the dead girl in her chamber. There they danced, till the morning, at the Ambassador's of France. Make what you will of it. (*PF*, 391—2)

Ruskin's style of argument here representative of a general type of critical reasoning which I have elsewhere analyzed extensively and labelled "perceptualist reasoning". [13] In such reasoning, the critic aims to establish critical assent by getting his reader to perceive the work of art in the same way that he perceives it. In literary criticism, this form of argument consists of background descriptions and focussing instructions which prepare the reader to perceive what the cirtic wants him to perceive in the given literary passage, followed by quotation of the passage, which in turn is followed by additional focussing descriptions and instructions to insure further that the desired perception is induced in the reader. Such reasoning can be distinguished from other forms of critical reasoning which are essentially logical and evidential or, alternatively, essentially causal in character.

Another fine example of Ruskin's use of such reasoning in support of his doctrine of strict factual portrayal in poetry is when he asks us to perceive "the peculiar dignity possessed by all passages which thus limit their expression to the pure fact", by requesting and inducing us to see it in a passage from the *Iliad* Ruskin first helps us to focus on the passage by setting the scene; the

passage is then cited, and then additional description of the passage is brought to insure that the desired perception is induced.

> Helen, looking from the Scaean gate of Troy over the Grecian host, and telling Priam the names of its captains, says at last:
> I see all the other dark-eyed Greeks; but two I cannot see,— Castor and Pollux, — whom one mother bore with me. Have they not followed from fair lacedaemon, or have they indeed come in their sea-wandering ships, but now will not enter into the battle of men, fearing the shame and scorn that is in Me ?
> Then Homer:
> So she spoke. But them, already, the life-giving earth possessed, there in Lacedamon, in the dear fatherland.
> Note, here, the high poetical truth carried to the extreme. The poet has to speak of the earth in sadness, but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thoughts of it. No.; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving. These are the facts of the thing. I see nothing else than these. Make what you will of them. (*PF*, 390)

This then, is Ruskin's style of argument. But regardless of how we characterize or assess it, the doctrine that it seeks to support — that the poet should confine himself to presenting facts and objects without moralizing or emotionalizing about them — is very clearly and forcefully stated. This doctrine is also one which is Powerfully present in Eliot's carly criticism.

Eliot insists that literature should always *present* things, rather than comment on, reflect upon, or preach about them. "Permanent literature is always a presentation either a presentation of thought, or a presentation of feeling by a statement of events in human action or objects in the external world (*SW*, 64—5) In his praise of Dante, Eliot asserts that the poet should not "aim to excite —that is not even a test of his success — but to something down", (*SW*, 170) He criticizes the Romantic poets for their fitful gushing of emotion, and the Victorians for their ruminating reflections. (*SP*, 64-5) E. L. Masters' *Spoon River Antholgy* is similarly criticized because "it is reflective, not immediate; its author is a moralist, rather than an observer." (*SP*, 35) In contrast, Thomas Middleton is praised because "he has no message; he is merely a great recorder"; a great observer of human nature, without fear, without sentiment, without prejudece, without personality." (*FLA*, 90)

4. This last quotation from Eliot also relates to his famous impersonal theory of poetry, which has been as influential and as controversial as his theory of the objective correlative. It too, I believe, has roots or at least prefigurement in Ruskin's "Of the Pathetic Fallacy". According to Eliot's impersonal theory of poetry, the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personalty"; "the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material." (*SW*, 53-4)

The poet, as we saw, must be "a great observer", his mind "a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images" (*SW*, 55), but his observations and feelings must be transmuted into impersonal presentation of objects and events, so that he remains an impersonal recorder. Thus, "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things." (*SW*, 58)

Eliot's theory, then, suggests two things: first, that the good poet is not an unfeeling, insensitive automaton, but rather a highly sensitive individual with emotions. Secondly, however, the good poet manages to convert his personal feelings and emotions into the impersonal material of art, into a dramatic situation or state of affairs which he can merely record or present with on personal emotion, remaining the detached and apparently impassive observer.

This process of observing and feeling things accurately and fully, but then digesting them and presenting them in poetry in a detached and impersonal style is precisely what Ruskin extols as the achievement of the higher order of poets, such as Homer, Dante and Shakespeare.

> Therefore the high creative poet might even be thought, to a great extent, impassive (as shallow people think Dante stern), receiving indeed all feelings to the full, but having a great centre of reflection and knowledge in which he stands serene, and watches the feeling, as it were, from far off. Dante, in his most intense moods. has entire command of himself, and can look around calmly, at all moments, for the image or word that will best tell what he sees to the upper or lower world. But Keats and Tennyson, and the poets of the second order, are generally themselves subdued by the feelings under which they write". (*PF*, 387)

For Ruskin, the greatest poets are "men who feel strongly, think strongly, and see truly", as opposed to the second order of poets (which include the Romantics and Victorians), who feel strongly, think weakly, and see untruly". (*PF*. 386) These poets of the first order. as we have seen, are impersonal, objective recorders of situations, objects and events that evoke emotion, but they themselves do not express or interpose their own personal emotions or moral reflections. In their combination of strong feeling and strong thought, Ruskin's first order of poets realize what Eliot so ardently advocated — the unification of sensibility, of feeling and thought. One might say, then, that Ruskin's concept of the great poet as an impersonal recorder who feels strongly but perceives and describes intelligently and truly foreshadows not only Eliot's impersonal theory of poetry but also his theory of the unification/dissociation of sensibility; and it suggests that these two theories are in fact more closely related than they are generally thought to be.

5. In the preceeding sections I have shown that four central doctrines in Ruskin's essay "Of the Pathetic Fallacy" are among the most central tenets of Eliot's early poetic. I shall conclude my comparison of these authors by briefly considering a fifth doctrine, which is suggested (rather than extensively argued as with the four previous points) in Ruskin's essay and which became a major principle in Eliot's poetics. This doctrine maintains that good or even great poetry does not require ornate 'poetical' expression — elegant words and fanciful metaphor, but rather can be and is best composed of clear, simple. and unadorned speech. Prose style, with its ordinary conversational speech, is not the contradiction of poetry, but can instead constitute poetry of the highest intensity and value.

> Ruakin makes this point in praise of *La Toilette de Constance*:
> If the reader will look through the ballad. he will find that there is not from beginning to end of it, a single poetical (so called) expression, except in one stanza. The girl speaks as simple prose as may be; there is not a word she would not have actually used as she was dressing." (*PF*, 392)

In contrast, Ruskin continues, bad poetry can be recognized by its excessive departure from direct and accurate prose statement. "by its adoption of . fanciful metaphorical expressions, as a sort of current coin". (*PF*, 393)

Eliot, of course, makes the simplicity, directness, and clarity of prose a central doctrine in his poetic. Part of Dante's greatness and lucidity is attributed

to the fact that "he employs very simple language, and very metaphors". (*SP* 210) Blake's poetry is similarly praised for its "language which has undergone the discipline of prose." (*SW*, 153) In a later, retrospective essay, Eliot explains his previous condemnation of Milton as a consequence of Milton's repeseting "poetry at the extreme limit from prose", and thus violating the tenet held by Eliot and his allies in poetic revolution "that verse should have the virtues of prose, that diction should become assimilated to cultivated contemporary speech, before aspiring to the elevation of poetry." (*SP*, 273) Indeed, for Eliot, it remained a "law of nature that poetry must not stray too far from the ordinary everyday language which we use and hear." (*SP*, 110) Thus, we find yet another major tenet of Eliot's poetics prefigured in Ruskin's literary criticism.

III

I trust that in the five tenets that have been discussed, we have demonstrated a very strong and substantial community of doctrine between Ruskin's essay "Of the Pathetic Fallacy" and Eliot's poetic theory. There can be no doubt that Eliot was familiar with this famous essay of Ruskin, since it was (and still is) probably Ruskin's most widely anthologized essay. and surely the one most discussed by literary critics.[14] Eliot, with his intense and critical interest in the poetic theory of his Victorian predecessors, and with his early study and appreciation of Ruskin's prose, probably knew the essay very well; and with his keen and perceptive intellect, Eliot most likely recognized and absorbed the value of its views.

On the basis of (1) Eliot's early familiarity with these doctrines of Ruskin and (2) the strong similarity of his own doctrines to Ruskin's, there is a plausible argument for the view that Ruskin and a significant influence on Eliot's poetic theory. Such an influence has never been acknowledged by Eliot himself, nor has it ever been suggested by Eliot scholars. However, I hazard to propose that there was some such influence. At the very least, the influence was an unconscious one, but I suspect that Eliot was of his doctrines' similarity to Ruskin's, even if not of their partial derivation from them.

If Ruskin's views influenced Eliot, and if Eliot was aware of their influence or at least of their striking similarity to his own views, why did he never acknowledge this ? Why did he never mention this when writing of Ruskin or when advocating the doctrines he shared with Ruskin ? why did he totally

ignore Ruskin's literary criticism, but rather treat Ruskin essentially as merely a prose stylist ? These apparent puzzles are readily resolved when we remember that Eliot, the impenetrable "Old Possum", was often reluctant to reveal himself and his sources, and could even be devious in concealing them. Moreover, there is every reason why Eliot would wish to deny or conceal the influence of Ruskin's, theory on his own poetics. Ruskin, we must remember, represented for Eliot's generation the champion, if not the very incarnation, of the spirit of Romanticism, which Eliot and his modernist cohorts were so bent on exorcising, and replacing with a new classical spirit. Ruskin's advocacy of the Gothic and his account of the artistic imagination made him a symbol of the mysterious, mystical, and intensely passionate in art, while Eliot, together with T. E. Hulme and Ezra Pound, were, of course, interested in innaugurating "a period of dry, hard, classical verse".[15] Eliot and his modernist allies were ardently striving to establish that in poetry "the great aim is accurate, precise, and definite description",[16] while Ruskin was taken by them as representing Romanticism's alleged advocacy of the obscure, vague, and overtly passionate.

In the light of the fact that Ruskin was thus recognized and often cited as the Romantic enemy of the new modernist aesthetic, it would have been very embarrassing and difficult for Eliot to acknowledge, even to himself, that many of the major tenets of his new poetic were essentially echoes or restatements of Ruskin's own poetic theory. For if Ruskin, the arch-Romantic, urged precisely the same sort of poetry that Eliot and his modernist allies were urging in their vehement anti-Romatic campaign, what justification was there all their heated polemics ? How could their movement be considered a significant poetic revolution ?

There was, therefore, every reason for Eliot not only to refrain from acknowledging the similarity or influence of Ruskin's poetic theory, but even indeed to conceal it.[17] This, as with other concealments,[18] he has done admirably well; and therefore there is no way to demonstrate with certainty my thesis that Ruskin directly influenced Eliot's poetics. However, even if that thesis can be no more than an unproven probability, there remains my weaker thesis of similarity of doctrine, which has been clearly demonstrated. This weaker thesis is nonetheless strong enough to place Eliot's poetic theory in a new (though somewhat less modern) perspective, and, more importantly, to provide an antidote to the virulent modernist myth of Ruskin the Romantic obscurantist. At least in his most famous piece of poetic theory, Ruskin the Romantic is every bit a modernist champion of accuracy, clarity, precision, and dry, objective statement.

Notes and References

1. D. Gallup, *T. S, Eliot: A Bibliography*, 2nd ed. (London. Faber, 1969),
2. M. Martin, *A Half-Century of Eliot Criticism: An annotated bibliography of books and articles in English, 1916-1965* (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. press, 1972).
3. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London; Faber, 1976). This collection will hereafter be referred to in this paper as *SE*. Other collections of Eliot's essays will be frequently referred to by abbreviation in the body of my text, together with page references. I shall be using the following editions and abbreviations: *The Sacred Wood* (London: Methuen, 1976), *SW*; *For Lancelot Andrewes* (London: Faber, 1970), *FLA*; *To Criticize The Critic* (London: Faber, 1978), *TCTC*; *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. F. Kermode (London: Faber, 1975), *SP*.
4. Ruskin's influence on Harvard (mainly through the mediation of his close friend and admirer, Charles Eliot Norton) is discussed in R. B. Stein, *John Ruskin and Aesthetic Thought in America, 1840-1900* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969).
5. Already in the 1920's, Ruskin's literary criticism was considered significant and valuable enough to be collected into an anthology: see *Ruskin as a Literary critic*, ed. A. H. R. Bell (Cambridge: Cambidge Univ. Press; 1928). G. Hough also pays tribute to the acuteness and penetration of Ruskin's literary criricism *in The Last Romantics* (London: Methuen, 1961), pp. 3-5:
6. See Eliot's praise of Arnold in the introduction to *The Sacred Wood* (*SW*, xi-xvii) and in his essay "Arnold and Pater" (*SE*, 431-443). See also the chapter on Arnold in T. S. Eliot, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London: Faber, 1964), pp, 103-119.
7. See T. S. Eliot, "Contemporary English Prose", *Vanity Fair*, New York, XX, 5, 1923, p. 51; and *Knowledge and Experience* (London: Faber, 1964), pp. 10-11; and also *TCTC*, pp 20-21.
8. For a very brief sketch of this development in Ruskin, see Hough, pp. 23-27. For an account of Eliot's puritan background and religious development, see L. Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 3-13, 44-49, 130-131 and R. Sencourt, *T. S. Eliot: A Memoir* (London: Garnstone Press, 1971), pp. 20-21, 26-28, 107-114.
9. The essay first appeared in the 1856 edition of *Modern Painters* and may be found in the Everyman edition: J.

Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (London: Dent, 1907), vol. 3, pp. 145-160. This essay has often been anthologized, and page references to it in my paper will be to the anthology of E. D. Jones (ed.), *English Critical Essays* (*Nineteenth Century*) (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1945), pp. 378-397, and will appear hereafter in the body of my text with the abbreviation *PF*.

10. Eliot's views on certain central issues in poetics and criticism (e. g. , subjectivity versus objectivity, personality versus impersonality) developed significantly as he matured. But since the development was continuous and gradual, it is difficult to give a precise date which separates his earlier and more radical critical theory from his later, more conservative outlook. One possible date is 1928, when Eliot, after his religious conversion (1927), confesses that his poetic interests have changed from the technical analysis of poetry *qua* poetry to the question of "the relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life" (*SW*, viii). Eliot himself suggests distinguishing his later critical period of public lectures and addresses, which began in the early 1930's, from his earlier critical work of reviews and essays for periodicals (*TCTC*, 17-18). Another possible dividing date is as late as 1939, when Eliot's enthusiasm for *literary* criticism so waned that he closed *The Criterion*, which he had edited since 1922. See J. D. Margolis, *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual Development, 1922-1939* (Chicago; Univ. of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. xi—xvii, 209-210. F. W. Bateson, who fiercely champions Eliot's early criticism over the later, dates the turning point of decline as 1921. See F, W. Bateson, "Criticism's Lost Leader", in *The Literary Criticism of T. S. Eliot*, ed. D. Newton-De Molina (London: Athlone, 1977), pp 9-19. Since I am interested in demonstrating a possible Ruskinian influence in Eliot's most seminal (and hence mainly earlier) critical views, I have taken care to base almost entirely on Eliot's essays before 1930.

11. See J. Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice* (London: Dent, 1907), vol, 3, p. 134. For Ruskin's emphasis on definiteness and particularity, see also the chapter where he maintains that in art "particular truths are more important than general ones" (*Modern Painters*, vol. 1, pp. 52-57).

12 See T. S. Eliot, "The Silurist", *The Dial*, 83 (1927), p. 262; and "Andrew Marvell", in *SP*, pp. 167-168.

13. For this and other forms of critical reasoning, see R. Shusterman, "The Logic of Interpretation", *Philosophical Quarterly*, 28 (1978), pp. 310-324; and "Evaluative Reasoning in Criticism", *Ratio*, 23 (1981), pp. 141-157.

14. Eliot must have been especially aware of Ruskin's anthologized works,

for he writes: "Ruskin's works are extremely readable in snippets even for many who take not a particle of interest in the things in which Ruskin was so passionately interested. Hence he survives in anthologies, while his books have fallen into undue neglect" (*SP*, 197).

15. T. E. Hulme, "Romanticism and Classicism", in *Speculations* (London: Routledge, 1960), p. 133. In this essay Ruskin is taken as representing the romantic attitude.
16. Ibid. , p. 132.
17. One might try to challenge my argument by asking why Eliot continued to ignore the similarity of his and Ruskin's views even after his poetic revolution had proved successful. For Eliot surely modified his condemnation of Milton after his anti-Miltonic revolution was won. (See "Milton I and II", in *SP*, 258-274.) There are at least two good answers to such a question. First, by the time Eliot's modernist poetic was firmly established, he had lost much of his zeal and interest in it, and was unlikely to be concerned with its sources and affinities. Secondly, by that time, and indeed since 1928, when he explicitly aligned himself with the conservative establishment (*FLA*, 7), Eliot would have regarded Ruskin as a very hostile figure in terms of social and political outlook, and he thus would be loath to recognize any community of doctrine with Ruskin, even in poetics.
18. I have elsewhere discussed other cases of Eliot's concealing of sources and motives. See R. Shusterman, "Eliot and Logical Atomism", *ELH*, 49 (1682), pp. 164-178; and "Objectivity and Snbjectivity in Eliot's Critical Theory", *Orbis Litterarum*, 37 (1982), pp. 217-226.

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Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol.VII : Nos. 1 - 2 : 1984
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Wordsworth's 'Spots of Time' and The Use of 'Chiaroscuro' in Constable: A Study in Aesthetic Parallelism

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Various are the ways in which parallels of aesthetic and thematic nature, acting as analogues of an essentially poetic vision of nature, find their finest expression in the poetry and painting of Wordsworth and Constable. The 'Spots of Time' in Wordsworth is one such analogue that has its correspondence in the 'Chiaroscuro' found so very conspicuous in Constable. The present undertaking is an attempt to show (i) the way in which the poet and the painter succeed in effectively bringing out these corresponding constituents in their respective art forms, and (ii) the vital aesthetic links that relate them (the constituents) together, where possible.

In order to grasp in full what the 'Spots of Time' passages are doing in Wordsworth or in what relation do they stand to 'Chiaroscuro' in Constable, it would be pertinent to read Wordsworth as the poet of memory, for, it is as part of memory, of events associated with a particular landscape from the early life of the poet that such 'spots' acquire an importance in his mature poetry. Wordsworth, through imaginative recapitulation of the days of childhood and early youth, recalls some of the finest memories of the time with an intensity of feeling that revivifies the past almost as a living presence. Indeed,

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it would not be an exaggeration to say that memory itself becomes a form of poetry in him bridging the gulf between a specific experience of the past and its present recollection. Memory is an powerful a factor with Wordsworth that while on a general level 'each man' for him 'is a memory to himself' (*The Prelude*, III, 189), on a more personal level, 'The thought of our past years', in him, 'doth breed/ Perpetual benediction' (*Immortality Ode*, 11. 133-4). Memory, like a preserved letter from the past tucked away in some deep recess of the mind, acts in Wordsworth as the only tender thread that connects his present being with a past event. As a poet of Nature, his link with the past is established by evoking the memory of such landscapes as were emotionally associated with certain events of his early life, That is why such events or experiences of the past that he loves to refer to as those 'first affections' and 'shadowy recollections'

'Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing',

that

'Uphold us, cherish. and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence',

as

'Truths that wake,
To perish never'

and

'Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy !'

— (*Immortality Ode*, 11. 151-60).

The evnts, by being perpetuated in his mind, acquire a significance beyond the mere sensuous as they are recalled, one after another, in his later life. Acting as it does as a powerful mode of imagination, memory is treated by Wordsworth as a restorative power that, while relating the man to his past, also unites his inward self with the outward subject. As Salvesen observes, "Memory has an all-pervading quality which cannot help being sensuous—it pervades the five senses, blending inner and outer; it pervades the sense of time, blending past and present; it unites the physical sense to the sense of temporal flux," [1]

This conception of memory as an active mode of imaginative faculty capable of influencing the growth of a man's personality is a great advance from the days of Hobbes for whom imagination was nothing more than a 'decaying sense', while memory acted as a means to express such decay as signified the fading power of the senses. What, on the contrary, happens in Wordsworth is a unification of the present self with an experience of the past, such experience being retained in the mind as a deep-seated seedling of memory. His real strength as a poet of remembered landscape is evident in his great spiritual autobiography, '*The Prelude*', It is flooded with memories of such episodes from his past which, when imaginatively recalled, serve as important milestones in the development of the poet's self.. It is owing to imagination that he comes to ensnrine them in 'The *Prelude*' as continuous process of evolution from the past to the present. Genuine memory begins to flow in when rememberable experiences are recalled in terms of emotions 'recollected in tranquillity'.

And since memory is the storehouse of impressions derived from physical as well as emotional events of the past, a sense of bodily continuity, along with that of the psychic, is felt throughout his retrospective poems. If physical distance lends charm to the view, temporal distance enables the poet. in moments of recollection, to revive both the scene of event and the event itself, long absence of the poet from the scene of original visit having made his heart grow fonder for them. We may notice here how, in the words of Salvesen, "any natural object once 'impressed'. in memory remained there, for Wordsworth, as a presence — it continued to exist both as idea and as things Remembered landscape no less than remembered event contributed to revived emotion. The visible world, taken up into the mind; retained, in the mind, its physical essence."[2] And despite his strong attachment in early life to the delights offered by the world of senses as he indulged in the 'fits of vulgar joy' or 'coarser pleasures' of his boyish days, nature still spoke to him of 'Remem-berable things'. Some of these pleasures, though products of 'collisions and quaint accidents' at times, were

> .... yet not vain
> Nor profitless, if haply they impress'd
> Collateral objects and appearances,
> Albeit lifeless then, and doom'd to sleep
> Until maturer seasons call'd them forth
> To impregnate and to elevate the mind',[3]

the 'maturer seasons' being the inspired moments of recollection. And even if the feeling of vulgar joy were to wear itself out of memory

> 'The scenes which were a witness of that joy
> Remained, in their substantial lineaments
> Depicted on the brain, and to the eye
> Were visible, a daily sight'.
>
> ——— (*The Prelude*, I, 627-30)

These very scenes, so beautiful and majestic in themselves, through the passage of time, become 'habitually dear' as they get associated with our deepest feelings in a manner most imperceptible, their 'subtantial lineaments' (hues and forms) being retained in the mind by 'the impressive discipline of fear' or 'repeated happiness', or the 'force of obscure feelings'.

Memory, by reviving such 'rememberable things' in later, maturer seasons of the poet's life, not only elevates his mind, but also fills it with

> 'Invigorating thoughts from former years,
> ... whose power
> May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
> To honorable toil'.
>
> ——— (*Ibid.*, 11. 649 and 651-53)

Talking about the power of memory to invest our remotest childhood days with a visionary gleam in moments of retrospection, he says how

> "These recollected hours ... have the charm
> Of visionary things, and lovely forms
> And sweet sensations that throw back our life
> A visible scene, on which the sun is shining "
>
> ——— (*Ibid.*, 11. 659-63).

At least the one result of such positive workings of memory can be discerned in the revived power of his mind to 'bring down/Through later years, the story of my life'. Equipped with such memories alone, a theme self-contained in itself, Wordsworth now prepares himself to unfold his autobiography with confidence saying, 'The road lies plain before me'. It is memories of this sort — of things rememberable and episodes not easily forgotten — that by indelibly impressing themselves on the poet's mind get recalled in years of maturity as 'spots of time'.

While '*The Prelude*' is replete with innumerable 'spots of time' from the past life of the poet, I should like to focus my attention on the two famous ones, viz., the gibbet scene and the 'waiting for the horses' episode narrated in Book XI of the poem. It is in the long extract beginning with 'There are in our existence spots of time' (l. 258 to l. 389) that we find Wordsworth giving expression to his quintessential views about the role of such memorable events as beneficent influence in his life.

The significant thing that draws our attention here is the interest that Wordsworth evinces in the selective power of memories in reviving only certain 'spots of time which, by virtue of their ability to lift us up when fallen and depressed, acquire a place of preeminence in our life by their restorative quality. While such moments worthy of our gratitude, though scattered throughout our life, can be found in all their conspicuity in the period of our childhood, the efficacy of their restorative power can be felt only among those passages of life in which the imaginative faculty or 'the mind/Is lord and master, and that outward sense/Is but the obedient servant of her will'.[4] Wordsworth here proceeds to cite the two examples from his childhood days to bring home the importance of such episodes in his development as the poet of imaginative insights into the workings of nature. These episodes, as he further states, however common in themselves at the time of their actual occurrence. assume importance in the course of life as memory comes to clothe them with a new light. That is why in the gibbet scene, the images of the naked pool, the beacon, and the girl, though offering the eyes 'an ordinary sight', come to be invested with the 'visionary dreariness' that 'should need/Colours and words that are unknown to man'. What Wordsworth here wants is to evoke that poetic sensiblity with the help of which one could paint and present such common things in an unusual aspect.

This is at once confirmed when then the poet, on revisiting the 'very scene' after many a year 'in the blessed time of early love', finds all its old objects like the pool, the crag, and the beacon endowed with 'The spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam'.[5] This gleam is further strengthened by 'radiance more divine' emanating from the very 'remembrances' previously associated with the spot and 'from the power/They left behind', the earlier feeling thus reinforcing the new one.

All this seems to be so very parodoxical to Kroeber that he observes, "One would not expect 'dreariness', even of a visionary kind, to increase radiance",[6] But, if looked at from the viewpoint of Wordsworth's own faith

in the power of the visionary gleam that once made 'The earth, and every common sight', as it were 'Apparelled in celestial light', the paradox presented by Kroeber seems to be resolved, for, even as the child moves towards becoming a youth — and that is what the poet already is while revisiting the gloomy spot in the time of early love — who, though 'daily farther from the east/Must travel, is still 'Nature's Priest,/And by the vision splendid/Is on his way attended' (*Immortability ode*, 11. 71-74). The rest of the work is accomplished by the magic power of youthful love that turns even the most gloomy sight into something radiantly beautiful, especially when one is accompanied, as is the poet here, by one's lady-love.

Breaking off at this point from the main line of his narration, Wordsworth tells us how man's greatness is finally based on the experiences of childhood, if only he has been able to contribute something of his own to them. Remembrances of experiences arising out of the very dawn (infancy) of life flood around him as the recognizes in them the sources or 'hiding places' of his visionary power, However, the access to the secret sources of his creative powers as a poet, once open to him, now seems to close upon him as he tries to approach the sources. He can experience them now only in glimpses, and as old age approaches, he fears, he 'May scarcely see at all'. And therefore. before the time runs out he feels it imperative to preserve and recreate such experiences in words by imparting to them 'A substance and a life', so that he may be able to 'enshrine the spirit of the past/For future restoration' (11. 342-3).

The second episode connected with the account of waiting for the horses that were to take Wordsworth and his brothers back home for the Christmas holidays and with the subsequent news about the death of their father, carries value in so far as the poet, in later life, could look back upon the episode, and all other elements associated with it such as the solitary sheep, 'the one blasted tree/The bleak music of that old stone wall/The noise of wood and water' (11. 378-80), the mist enveloping the two roads, etc. , as 'spectacles and sounds to which/I often would repair and thence would drink,/As at a fountain' (11, 383-5). So strong is the impact of this experince on his subconscious mind that he still feels 'in this later time' his power of visionary gleam being revived, not as in the earlier episode, by a revisit to the place concerned, but through association with the occurrence of another similar experience 'when storm and rain/Beat on my roof at midnight, or by day/When I am in the woods (11.386-77).

Only then, unknown to him, he feels how 'The workings of my spirit thence are brought' (l. 389). This is how, by drinking at the fountain of such 'remembera-ble' experiences, that Wordsworth can, even now in 1805, revive and strengthen his imaginative powers that can restore him in times to come.

In both these episodes the element of aesthetic import that at once engages our attention is the way the selective power of memory, by acting as part of the poet's individual history, takes him back to those scenes of early association that, while fulfiling some of his 'dearest landscape longings', require on his part to capture their transience in images of enduring existence. And what Wordsworth is able to achieve through memory, Constable succeeds in achieving through the practice of chiaroscuro. Looking upon chiaroscuro as the source of one of the most efficient principles in art, Constable defines its function as that of marking 'the influence of light and shadow upon Landscape, not only in its general effect on the whole, and as a means of rendering a proper emphasis on the "parts", in Painting, but also to show its use and power as a medium of expression, so as to note "the day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade".'.[7]

So acute is Constable's sense of the moment or hour of the day or season at the time of composing a landscape that he records each one of them in terms such as 'morning breeze', 'summer afternoon', 'sunset', 'windy noon', 'morning after a stormy night', etc., as can be seen from the 'List of the Engravings' mentioned in his 'Letterpress' to *'Enlish Landscape'*. Even major paintings like *'The Hay Wain'* and *'The Cornfield'* originally carried titles like *'Landscape: Noon'* and *'Harvest Noon: A Lane Scene'*, showing the artist's concern for the particular hour. This is what makes his landscapes representations of specific places embodying certain precise moments from the flying course of time, chiaroscuro helping him to capture such moments on the canvas in terms of light and shade. Little wonder therefore that the place in Constable, as in Wordsworth, becomes the projection of the self out in space enshrining the memory of an hour in the form of chiaroscuro. Chiaroscuro thus, acting as the conveyor of emotions representing the inner season of the artist's psyche, and as the recorder of a specific 'spot of time' representing the external season in nature, occupies a very central place in the landscape art of Constable. As Beckett observes, "*Chiaroscuro* could be used to register not only the place where the emotion and been felt, but also the season and the time of day ....."[8]

Again, according to Constable's own declaration, as the subjects of his landscapes were derived from real scenes, the effects of light and shadow revealed

in them were regarded by him as 'transcripts only of such as occurred at the time of being taken'.[9] However, the general effect produced by his great paintings is something so very much akin to Wordsworth's evocation of the 'visionary gleam' that, instead of appearing as mere transcripts of actual scenes, they seem to put on a new dress as coloured by the combined effect of his poetic vision and chiaroscuro, "Capable as this aid of 'Light and shadow' is", to put it in his own words, "of varying the aspect of everything it touches."[10] Finding in no other department of painting the need for its 'first attractive quality' or 'general effect' so much as in the landscape art, Constable came to look opon the latter as the one branch of art which, owing to the very nature of its subject, enables the artist to make his work efficient by applying the principles of colour and chiaroscuro with a greater confidence. "The Artist", he says, "..... ought, indeed, tohave powerful organs of expression entirely at his command, that he may use them in every possible from, as well as ... with the most freedom; therefore, whether he wishes to make the subject of a joyous, solemn or meditative character, by flinging over it the cheetful aspect which the sun bestows, by a proper disposition of shade, or by the appearances that beautify its rising or its setting, a true 'General Effect' should never be lost sight of by him throughout the production of his work, as the sentiment he intends to convey will be wholly influenced by it."[11]

Light and shadow being the two elements nature that, in the famous words of Benjamin West uttered to Constable, 'never stand still', it indeed became a challenging task for Constable to capture their transience on a permanent basis in his art, The important question therefore is: 'How does Constable come to fix in his art the flux of nature's evanescent elemnts ?' Perhaps an answer to this query may be found in what Constable thought of the art of painting, the advice he gave to the young aspirants of art, and his conception of Nature.Regarding painting as a science that should be pursued as an inquiry into the laws of nature, his knowledge of such laws as he could gather from his close observation various phenomena of nature as artist led him to consider chiaroscuro as embodying the relationship of a kinetic nature between the concrete forms of nature and her more energetic forces such as light, shade, and wind that affect the former. It was therefore as an artist who combined poetic sentiment and natural vision into one, that Constable found it imperative to establish this relationship of a most subtle nature on a firmer basis in his art. This he was able to achive in a most exquisite manner by raising the impalpability of such transient forces to a level

of substantiality capable of suffusing the material forms with the bloom and vigour of a new life. Secondly, by putting his own advice into practice as to how any aspiring painter, if he wanted to carve out a name for himself, should not only study nature patiently and laboriously, but more importantly, should suggest 'something more than an outward resemblance of his subject', that Constable found it necessary to render in his own art such elusive forces that represented this 'something more' than what could be offered merely by the outwardly observed front of nature. "Only in this way", as Beckett puts it so very succinctly, "When the observed effect had been recalled on canvas, could the artist hope to make the spectator seem to hear the sound of water dripping from the wheel of a watermill, or feel the wind on his face as the clouds chased one another over Hampstead Heath."[12] Finally, his faith in nature as the altar of God or a 'Living Presence' to which he came, like Wordsworth, to pay his tribute in full humility for its variegated gifts of beauty, also led him, like the poet, to build up the being that we are', by 'deeply drinking-in thus enabling him, once again, to reveal in a flash the fleeting in nature in terms of permanance.

Chiaroscuro being the only means left open to a painter to record the lvanescent in nature, it became, in the words of Kroeber, very 'vital to great landscape painting ..... wherein the full emotional power of light emerges".[13] However, in landscape poetry which by nature is a 'temporal and sequential' art, light has to be presented metaphorically. And yet, a landscape poem too can reveal nature's metability in an enduring manner by recording passing atmospheric or terrestrial impressions in the form of an abiding aesthetic image. Personal history in landscape poetry thus becomes equivalento chairoscuro in painting, for, 'A Wordsworthian landscape is inseparable from the history of the poet's mind'.[14] Some of the best poems concerning landscapes of memory deal with such moments or episodes from Wordsworth's life as otherwise would be lost into the limbo of oblivion, but for his saving them as significant psychic monuments from the ravages of time. This living sense of the past in respect of the childhood episodes is what makes Wordsworth turn them into 'spots of time' to be enshrined for 'future restoration'. He comes to see them now as repositories of joy and wisdom that lead him to perceive the child as' Father of the Man'. All such episodes therefore would be of no significance unless retained in the mind called back to life through the recollective consciousness of the poet, as this alone can enable him to link the present with the past, the father with the child.

As Kroeber so very illuminatingly puts it, "Much of his best verse concerns unimportant incidents which become significant when, subsequently, Wordsworth perceives them to have been decisive to his maturation. Without the poet's self consciousness the events would remain trivial. Even a spectacular scene, such as the view from Snowdon, would be superficially sensational, .. were it not means through which the poet becomes aware of enhancement of his imaginative power. Here history in the mode of a reflexive conciousness enters into poetic landscape as a genuine equivalent of the painter's chiaroscuro."[15]

The importance and validity of chiaroscuro as the very soul and medium of art in Constable can further be realised if we can see the effective use to which he put it. Chiaroscuro comes to his aid by contributing to the effect of arrested indistinctness by lessening the sharpness and clarity of physical details. This is so because, like Wordsworth, he came to view his subject not necessarily as an object in a given landscape to be perceived keenly by the physical eye alone—though such perception formed the very basis of a larger vision in both—but as a psychic image to be grasped by the inward eye. Such image, owing to its very nature, can never achieve the kind and degree of clarity commonly associated with the physical perception. It is bound to be pictorally blurred being the result of imagination's raid on the visible. This is where one may notice in Constable that while every possible care is taken to paint each portion of a picture in detail and nothing is neglected, [16] there still remains a sense of 'unfinished perfection' as can be evinced from the final versions of '*The Leaping Horse*' and other paintings such as the '*The Cenotaph*', '*The Valley Farm*', '*The Salisbury Cathedral from the Bishop's Grounds*', etc., not excluding even '*The Hay Wain*', painted with such loving care. All this sounds very much analogous to Wordsworth who, likewise, is unable 'to paint' the dreariness of the stony moor because of its visionary quality, or to paint what he was or what nature meant to him when he first went among the hills and woods 'a few miles above Tintern Abbey', precisely because, now in 1798, with his imagination in full command of his mind, he has 'learned to look on nature, not as in the hour/Of thoughtless youth'.

Coming back to Constable we can see how in his 'Cathedral', he sacrificed finish for the sake of freshness in order to make his escape 'in the evanescence of the chiaroscuro'. Kroeber, commenting on '*The Hay Wain*', says that though 'nothing is slighted' or 'out of focus' in the picture, it is still devoid of that

'microscopic accuracy' that we usually find in a Van Eyck landscape, when seen in a magnified form. Says he, "Equal magnification of a background segment of *The Hay Wain* reveals bluriness. Constable's concern for each portion of his picture is care that details of light and shadow contribute to the effect of the picture as a chiaroscuro totality." [17] However, while one may have no quarrel with Kroeber's statement that Constable meant by the term chiaroscuro 'something slightly different from its conventional signification in his own day', it is difficult to agree with his conclusion when he says, "The distinction can be indicated roughly by saying that Constable emphasizes the 'light' half of the fusion." [18] To lend support to his concluding remark Kroeber further states how the importance attached to the quality of light by Constable is evidenced not only throughout Leslie's '*Life of Canstable*', but more especially in Leslie's notes taken from the artist's lectures. This indeed is a bit difficult to swallow, for the general impression, despite what Kroeber has to say, that emerges from our reading of Leslie's '*Life of Constable*' as well as from Constable's own various references to chiaroscuro in the 'Letterpress' to the prints of his '*English Landscape*' and his lectures on the history of landscape painting, appers to be one of a nearly equal emphasis that he seems to lay on both 'light and Shadow' as the two most 'powerful organs' of expression in painting. As already noted earlier, Constable considers the influence of chiaroscuro (light and shade) as very vital in creating general effect in landscape and 'as a means of rendering a proper emphasis on the "parts"; while he shows at the same time its importance as a medium of expression to note 'the sunshine *and the shade*' (Italics mine). Perhaps it would be better to suggest that Constable went on varying his emphasis on the light or the shadowy half of his pictures according to the hour of the day he came to paint them at, 'the effects of light and shadow being transcripts only of such as occurred at the time of being taken'.[19]

A look at some of his paintings would bear enough testimony to what I have been trying to suggest. While pictures like the '*Flatford Mill, on the River Stour*' and '*Bout-Building near Flatford Mill*', having been painted either in broad daylight or in the 'still sunshine of a hot summer's day', display more light than areas of darkness, pictures such as '*Study of a House amidst Trees: Evening*' and '*The Cenotaph*', for their having been painted either in the evening or late in the misty season of autumn, reveal shadowy areas that dominate the few stretches of pale light on the ground, creating a solemnity of atmosphere associated

with such time or season. One can easily notice the details getting blurred in both these pictures, all the more so in the *'Trees'* study, on account of the impressionistic technique revealed in it, If the *'Leaping Horse'*, with its dark foreground and thick foliage of the trees on the left, coupled with the impasto technique of its brushwork, impresses one with the sense of 'unfinished perfection' referred to earlier, the *'Flatford Mill from a Lock on the Stour'* and the full-scale study for *'Hadleigh Castle'* are further pointers in this direction, though gloriously delightful in their picturesque appeal. Moreover, what Kroeber has said of *'The Hay Wain'*, is equally true of *'The Vale of Dedham* and *'The Valley Farm'* whose dark areas, despite magnification, would reveal the same kind of blurriness as is revealed by the shadowy segments of *'The Hay Wain'*.

It would therefore be safer to suggest that at least in paintings such as those where the obscure gains over the clear, Constable is interested in 'no light, but rather in darkness made visible', Hence his admiration for the Dutch masters like Ruysdael and Rambrandt for rendering a similar effect in their landscapes. Paying his homage to the genius of Ruysdael for revealing in his landscapes, unlike Claude, a delight in the type of scenery that he himself loved to paint, he says, "In Claude's picture's with scarcely an exception, the sun ever shines. Ruysdael, on the contrary, delighted in ..... those solemn days, peculiar to his country and ours, when without storm, large rolling clouds scarcely permit a ray of sunlight to break through the shades of the forest." [20] In a like manner, showing his preference for Rembrandt's *'Mill'* wherein the powerful effect of chiaroscuro 'envelopes & swallows up all the detail', he further states how 'Rembrandt chose the twylight to second his wishes, knowing it would be taking too great a liberty with nature to take a *light* in which all the minutiae of Nature is seen and must be displayed'. [21] Referring to the *'Mill'* as Rembrandt's 'pastoral symphony', Constable even goes further in considering it to be a folly on the part of Rembrandt's successors for praising the *'Mill'* for the wrong thing, viz., for its grandeur (of light), 'as if the pastoral symphony, could be played by a trumpet, or key bugle, or any other biosterous and tumultuous instrument'. [22] All such statements clearly point to Constable's interest in a sort of picture where light, at once 'boisterous and tumultuous', revealing things in all their details, no more constitutes its principal person.

The unconscious beginnings of the impressionistic technique that Constable reveals in his studies preparatory to his finished oils (visible in the full-scale studies

of these oils as well) in the form of colour broken into graded tints and in his later paintings in the form of white pigment broken into flecks — popularly known as 'Constable's snow' — lend support to our main line of argument as to how with passing of time, he became 'more interested in broad masses of light and shade and less and less interested in details and fidelity to appearance. .....'[23] Moreover, Gessner's famous *'Letter to M. Fuslin on Landscape Painting'* (1770), read with both pleasure and profit by Constable, also must have influenced his young mind to develop a picture from the first impressions of a landscape 'conceived in the first warmth' of a spontaneous response to it, thus making it necessary on his part to cut out at the same time the clutter of details as forming the main features of his pictures. Gessner regarded this interest in 'the merest accessories' as a fault among the weaker artists. the best ones seeking beauty 'in the disposition and variety of masses, in the arrangement of shadow and light, and so forth'.[24] All this must have helped Constable to formulate his own individual manner of enlarging his pictures from the first illuminating impressions of a given spot at a given time, all captured in rapidly drawn sketches, before the sweep of advancing shadows replaced them by new ones. It is a well-known fact as to how Constable and his friend Dunthorne the senior, an amateur artist, were in the habit of recording the first impressions of a view drawn directly from nature. Thanks to David Lucas, Constable's engraver, who, commenting on their practice, informs us, "Both Dunthorne (senior) and Constable were very methodical in their practice, taking their easels with them into the fields and painting one view only for a certain time each day. When the shadows from objects changed, their sketching was postponed until the same hour next day." [25] Constable was perhaps already looking at things with the eye of an impressionist when, convinced of finding nature to be always in a state of constant flux, he said, "The world is wide; no two days are alike, not even two hours; neither were there ever two leaves of a tree alike since the creation of the world."[26]

Constable's was a gentle soul that loved to be at home amidst the scenes of his native region where he was born and brought up. Like Wordsworth celebrating the beauty of his 'Dear native regions' of his childhood days, Constable was never tired of capturing the beauty of such scenes as lay scattered among the quiet retreats of nature associated with his boyhood days, like his beloved Stour valley and the region around East Bergholt and Dedham that, in his own words, made him a painter. Expressing his sense of gratitude and longing for such places that always stirred his deepest feelings, he states, "As long as I do

paint, I shall never cease to paint such places, They have always been my delight "[27] "Still", as he further states, "I should paint my own places best; painting is with me but another word for feeling and I associate 'my careless boyhood' with all that lies on the banks of the Stour; those scenes made me a painter, and I am grateful."[28] We know it very well how almost throughout his life he returned to East Bergholt every summer 'to draw fresh inspiration from the scenes he knew so well and his first paintings all depict the Stour valley and other parts of England that he both knew well and which harboured for him happy associations'.[29] It is therefore no wonder that he hardly felt any desire to go out in search of the stupendous amidst the aweinspiring Alps, as did Turner. Instead, as Orpen would have it, " ... Constable opened his door and found beauty waiting to be painted."[30]

It would be of interest to note here how he achives his best chiaroscuro effects mainly in landscapes representing scenes of his most favourite haunts since his boyhood, his Lake district pictures lacking remarkably in this quality on account of his feeling oppressed and uneasy in an otherwise alien atmosphere of the Lakes. The full title of his *'English Landscape'* also makes it clear how his avowed aim in publishing the prints of some of his favourite pictures, engraved by Lucas, was to display 'Various Subjects of Landscape, Characteristic of English Scenery, principally intended to display the phenomena of the Chiaroscuro of Nature'. How very strikingly all this reminds us of wordsworth whose best poems are those where the deep-rooted impressions of some of the most rememberable (enchanting as well as terrifying) expriences of his childhood and early life are revived through memory as endearing "spots" hallowed by the passage of time'. And if Constable's intensity of attachment amounting to deep reverence for Nature as found in the most simple localities of England's country-side makes his art essentially spiritual and English, his effective use of chairoscuro as a means not only to arrest the evanescence of nature, but also to create a unity of poetic mood, turns it into being essentially romantic.

We may note in conclusion that whatever the subject of his landscapes, almost all of them are bound together by the kindred quality of chiaroscuro, whose ubiquitous presence in each one of them makes them appear as veritable variations on the common theme of light and shade. Moreover, it is chiaroscuro which helps Constable achieve internal unity for his major landscapes by fusing together in each one of them various elements of nature, transient and enduring alike, into a harmonious whole. In sum, one can safely assert that

what Wordsworth is able to achieve through memory, Constable is able to accomplish through chiaroscuro that, by acting as a visual counterpart to memory (the verbal mode of imagination in the poet), makes it possible for the painter to enshrine the fleeting in nature in terms of permanence.

Notes and References

1. Christopher Salvesen, *'The Landscape of Memory; A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry'* (London: Edward Arnold, 1970), p. 80.
2. Ibid. , pp. 86-87.
3. *'The Prelude'* (1805), ed. Stephen Gill, 2nd ed. (London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1, 619-24. Elsewhere he refers to such 'Remembrances' as being not lifeless: Cf. Bk. IV. 11. 360-61.
4. Ibid. , XI, 11. 271-73. Cf, 11. 368-71 from Bk. II. Recalling here the memory of his early morning walks as a school boy, and seeking to trace the origin of what he felt then, he says:

   'Oft in those moments such a holy calm
   Did overspread my soul, that I forgot
   That I had bodily eyes, and what I saw
   Appear'd like something in myself, a dream
   A prospect in my mind'.

   The parallel is striking. The 'Prospect' he sees in the surrounding landscape is here realised as part and projection of his mind in complete control of the bodily eye.
5. Ibid. , 1. 323. Cf. 'Elegiac Stanzas', 11. 13-18. On visiting the Peele Castle in a season of Calm and contrasting it with its picture in a storm painted by Sir George Beaumont Wordsworth tells how

   'THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand
   To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
   The light that never was, on sea or land,
   The consecration, and the Poet's dream;
   I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile.
   Amid a world how different from this !'
6. Karl Kroeber, *'Romantic Landscape Vision: Constable and Wordsworth'*

(Madison: The University of Wiscons in Press, 1975), p. 11.

7. R.B. Beckett (ed.) *'John Constable's Discourses'*, XIV (Ipswich: The Suffolk Records Society, 1970), p.9. Also see *post-* chapter IV, *'The Divine as Immanent in Nature'*, p, 112, for Constable's comment on the importance and function of chiaroscuro in Nature in arresting her sudden and transient appearances from the fleeting passage of time, thus imparting to such evanescant elments (like light and shade) 'a lasting and sober existence' in art.
8. Ibid, p. 5.
9. Ibid, p. 10.
10. Ibid, p. 24.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid. , p, 5.
13. Karl Kroeber, op. cit. , p. 90. I owe much to Professor Kroeber's brilliant treatment of chiaroscuro in Constable in relation to the treatment of 'spots of time' in Wordsworth. His critical insights have helped me in my own discussion of the present topic.
14. Ibid, p. 103.
15. Loc. cit.
16. It is worth noting his own comment in this connection in his letter of 8 April, 1826, to Fisher with reference to *'The Cornfield'* : "It is not neglected in any part; the trees are more than usually studied, the extremities well defined, as well as the stems."— C.R. Leslie, *'Memoirs af the Life of John Constable'*, ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, 1951), p. 153.
17. Karl Kroeber, op. cit. , p. 16.
18. Ibid. , n. 16.
19. See above, n. 9.
20. R. B. Beckett, op. cit. , p. 63.
21. Ibid. , p. 87.
22. Loc. cit.
23. John Sunderland, *'Constable'* (London: Phaidon, 1970), p. 13.
24. Excerpt from Gessner's *'Letter'* quoted by Lorenz Eitner, 'Neoclassicism and Romanticism (1750-1850), *'Sources and Documents in the History of Art Series'*, ed. H. W. Janson (London: Prentice Hall International Inc. , 1971), p.50.
25. John Sunderland, op. cit. , p.4. Lucas quoted.
26. C.R. Leslie, *'Memoirs of the Life of John Constable'*, ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidoh, 1951), p. 273.
27. Ibid. , p. 85.
28. Loc. cit.
29. John Sunderland, op. cit. , p.5.
30. Sir Willsam Orpen, 'Natural Landscape', *'The Outline of Art'*, ed, Sir Wiliam Orpen: (London: George Newnes Ltd. , n. d.), p. 400.

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Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol.VII : Nos. 1 - 2 : 1984
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The Metaphysical Poets and the Origins of Ralph Waldo Emerson's Transcendentalism

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After lecturing throughout Illinois and Iowa, Ralph Waldo Emerson fulfilled other engagements in washington D. C, and Maryland during the winter of 1872, In Baltimore, Walt Whitman gave him a letter from Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts inviting the Concord writer to linger in the capital and deliver further addresses.

On the morning of January 7, Sumner cajoled Emerson into visiting the black students of newly opened Howard University where he was "compelled by an artifice to speak to them."[1] Emerson, who disliked extemporaneous speaking, hastily produced some sheets from his lecture on books and in a rambling talk asked his audience if they had read the "divine songs of George Herbert," He "was a person of singular elevation of mind" and Emerson recommended that "every young man and every young woman who wishes inspiration from books" should use for "their Sunday reading and their Monday reading the little volume of George Herbert's poems." Emerson wondered whether these verses were in the university library and promised to give the students an edition of Herbert's poems if none was available. It was the "best

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religious English book" Emerson could recall, for nobody had spoken such pure and sweet religious sentiments as the rector of Bemerton. Emerson concluded his short presentaion by discussing Skakespeare and Goethe, but he reminded his audience that Herbert's age was the greatest in English literary and intellectual history; only Periclean Athens could rival the era of Elizabeth and James.[2]

Although Emerson considered his speech quite poor, it was widely covered in the press and soon he began receiving congratulatory letters on the fine advice he had given the eager students. After returning to Boston, Emerson was surprised and delighted to hear from a bookseller that "There isn't a Herbert to be had, sir. Since your speech was published there has been such a demand for them that they are all sold out, and none left in Boston,"[3]

Emerson's lavish praise of Herbert was not just a rushed idiosyncratic judgment from America's foremost man of letters, delivered when his creative and critical powers were gradually diminishing. Throughout Emerson's life George Herbert and the metaphysical poets remained one of his standards of excellence. In 1815 young Emerson wrote his brother william about these lines from John Donne he had read in Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*:

> Here lies a she-son and a he-moon there
> She gives the best light to his sphere
> Or each is both and all and so
> They unto one another nothing owe

while Johnson severely criticized them, Emerson boldly disagreed, arguing that "This is old fashioned Poetry—I should like to see the Poem it was taken from."[4] In his diaries Emerson mentioned the works of John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Richard Crashaw, Richard Carew, and Henry Vaughan 115 times in entries ranging from short pithy statements to detailed, lengthy analyses of their style and thought; many of these entries became important sections of his essays.[5] And when the aging Emerson collected his favorite poems in *Parnassus* (1874), there was the disproportionate selection of 36 poems from the metaphysical school, including sixteen of Herbert's verses.

The influence of the metaphysical poets goes far beyond identifying "echoes" of their writing in Emerson's work, as Norman A. Britten and J. Russell Roberts did decades ago in their pioneering studies.[6] Emerson's deepest interest in the school coincided with the formulation of his transcendental doctrines and the creation of a vocation that would satisfy his profoundest spiritual and

literary aspirations. During the late 1820s and the 1830s, Emerson studied the metaphysicals deeply and carefully as he moved from Unitarianism to transcendentalism. Most of Emerson's references to the metaphysical school in his diaries, lectures, and essays occur while he was developing the philosophical doctrines that would make him a romantic sage in antebellum America. Emerson's transcendentalism and career as a writer derived from his own experiences and psychological needs, the decay of Puritanism and the disputes raging within Unitarianism, European romanticism, Neoplatonic idealism, oriental mysticism, and from a diluted form of Kant's philosophy as interpreted by Coleridge, Carlyle, and certain continental philosophers, Emerson's romanticism was also powerfully affected by his own very personal reading of the metaphysical poets. They helped him develop his transcendentalism by assisting in the creation of his mature conceptions about nature, the divine, and the analogical relationship between man and the cosmos.

Emerson's high evaluation of these poets was conditioned by his concept of the poet as a representative man; this belief in turn led him to exalt Donne, Marvell, and especially Herbert because they approached his model of the ideal poet. The poet, according to Emerson, created the lasting verses of his nation by memorializing great men and ideas. Poets also revealed the organic unity of God, man, and nature, and, in Neoplatonic terms, they were "liberating Gods" who freed men from quotidian reality to allow them glimpses of higher spiritual realms.[7] Emerson, like Friedrich Schiller, distinguished between "poets by education and practice" and "poets by nature" who wrote through inspiration.[8] The poet by nature united intuition, inspiration, and imagination to express "a very high short of seeing, which does not come by study, but by the intellect being where and what one sees."[9] These "poets by nature," Emerson argued, abounded in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which he considered the greatest age of English literature :

> It seems to me that every library should respect the culture of a scholar & a poet. Let it not then want those books in which the English language has its teeth & bones & muscles largest and strongest namely all the eminant books from the accession of Elizabeth to the death of Charles II [10]

To Emerson, the age of the metaphysicals had "such richness of genius because for a short period two antithetical modes of thought-utility and idealism—were fused into the spheres of poetry and philosophy. This was the moment in history when, with its "feet still planted on the immense forces of night," the English Conversed "with solar & steller creation." The period was a flowering, the

moment of perfect health when the spiritual and physical realms synthesized. What had come before was a primitive vigor. What came afterwards was effete and barren. The interval was holy ground when "the perceptive powers reach with delight their greatest strength."[11] Emerson repeatedly expressed amazement at the dramatic appearance of so many fine writers : "No brain has dallied with finer imaginings than Shakspeare No richer thoughted man than Bacon, no holier than Milton or Herbert."[12] Unfortunatly, Emerson lamented, it would probably be impossible for any future age to vie with the etherial poetry of the Metaphysicals and their contempories.

> Homer & Virgil & Dante & Tasso & Bryon & Wordsworth have powerful genius whose amplest claims I cheerfully acknowledge. But 'tis a pale ineffectual fire when their shines I have for them an affectionate admiration I have for nothing else. They set me on speculations. They move mywonder at my self. They suggest the great endowments of the spiritual man. They open glimpes of the heaven that is in the intellect [T]he heat will never reach again that Hesperian garden in which alone these apricots & pomegranates grew.[13]

After the Civil war, Emerson believed, English thought became timid, narrow, and fearful of idealism. Only Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle were exceptions to the dreary modern period that began with John Locke,

Emerson's admiration for the metaphysical poets was mediated through his study of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Emerson first read Coleridge's poetry in 1821; by the early 1830's the Englishman was perphaps the single most important influence on his literary life.[14] While the principal idea Emerson derived from Coleridge was the Kantian distinction between transcendental Reason and empirical Understanding, Coleridge's lengthy analyses of the metaphysical school deepened Emerson's own perception of these writers. The English romantic argued that metaphysical literature was Characterized by sound thought and great style. Next to Milton, Coleridge believed Herbert was the greatest seventeenth English poet. In general, Coleridge admired the metaphysicals because he felt their literature had evolved by an inner organic principle.[15]

When Coleridge described the creation of poetry in that famous account of the Imagination which foundation for romantic and modern literary criticism, he used a poem fromEmerson's favorite era of English literature to describe a process Emerson thought crucial to great poetry and especially to the metaphysical poets :

> The poet, described in *ideal* perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other,

> according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magic power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities : of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the representative [16]

Emerson carefully studied Coleridge's works, copied quotations from the metaphysical poets out of the Englishman's books, and eventually concluded there were even similarities between Herbert and Coleridge because they each spoke "*ab intra*" instead of "*ab extra.*" Both men personified "essential distinction of genius [T]hey are an emanation of that very thing or reality they tell of, & not merely an echo or picture of it !"[17] Coleridge's convincing account of the etaphysicals' organic principles and lofty philosophy reinforced their growing influence on Emerson.

The Concord writer also exalted the metaphysical poets because they represented the Platonic influence that was the glory of Elizabethan literature. Emerson's Platonism was a creative combination of fact and fancy, the result of his early and detailed reading of Plato in the original Greek at Harvard, his study of Thomas Taylor's questionable commentaries and translations of Plato and Plotinus, and his interst in minor Neoplatonists such as Proclus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus.[18] He characteristically broadened his definition of Platonism to include everybody who believed in the correspondence between the worlds of matter and spirit. The Platonic mind loved analogy : "Man is an analogist. He cannot help seeing everything under its relations to all other things & to himeself."[19] For Emerson, Plato was the source of philosophical unity from which all subsequent thought flowed, and all individuals who thirsted after an organic, idealist perception of the universe were Platonists. A sense of unity and the instinct to see resemblances separated the Platonists from materialists such as Locke who were always discrediting analogical thinking and instead required "heaps of facts."[20]

Emerson mourned the declension that had taken place in English literature since the age of the metaphysicals : "the judgments are all dated from London, & that expansive element which creates literature is steadily denied. Plato is resisted & Jordano Bruno, Behem, Swedenborg, Donne."[21] Metaphysical literature was a rare instance when Saxon practicality and Platonic idealism were combined in the sermons of Donne and the poetry of Donne, Marvell, and Herbert. Emerson's

study of Coleridge, Plato, and the Neoplatonists helped him transform the metaphysical poets into a school of protoromantics who presciently anticipated his own literary and spiritual values.

Although Emerson praised the metaphysical poets excessively throughout his journals and published essays, his reading of them was actually quite discerning and selective. Emerson never really became interested in Cowley, Crashaw. Carew, or Vaughan. During the 1820s he quoted in his journals a number of Cowley's poems and essays but he used him sparingly in his early lectures and made only one extended comment about the English poet during his entire career.[22] Crashaw received a more cursory treatment, being mentioned four times in Emerson's diaries and once in a lecture on English literature. He was "a worse sort of Cowley," Emerson laconically noted.[23] He almost completely ignored Carew, who merited one brief entry in his jornal.[24] Vaughan first came to Emerson's attention in the late 1840s. Despite the praise of his friend William Ellery Channing,Emerson continued to slight Vaughan in his public readings of seventeenth century poets and believed "it was wrong to match him with Herbert, who always gains by long acquaintance."[25] Cowley, Crashaw, Carew, and Vaughan did not meet Emerson's definition of a poet as a man who had "the largest power to receive and to impart" the "eternal trinity of truth, Goodness, and Beauty."[26] They possessed neither the Saxon vigor nor the "Oriental soaring" which characterized the greatest literarture of the seventeenth century.[27]

Emerson considered Andrew Marvell a lesser poet than Donne and Herbert, but he admired his "etherial poetry" and wondered whether an accurate portrait of him would ever be written.[28] The lyricists Marvell and Herbert were examples of the true poetry mankind craved, that "Moral poem of which Jesus chanted to the Ages."[29] For Emerson, Marvell ranked just below Herbert and Milton as one of the creators of the Elizabethan age's great language and religious poetry.

Critics from Emerson's perceptive contemporary Oliver Wendell Holmes to Pierre Legouis have recognized that Emerson used Marvell in his essays and poetry.[30] Marvell's four beat line and tetrameter couplets may have influenced Emerson's own poems. There are also indications that Emerson appropriated some of Marvell's poems for his own verse. In "Manners," Emerson wrote :

> He looketh seldom in their face,
> His eyes explore the ground,—
> The green grass is a looking-glass
> Whereupon their traits are found.[31]

There are two Marvellean sources for this section. One is from "The Mower's Song":

> My mind was once the true survey
> Of all these Medows fresh and gay;
> And in the greeness of the Grass
> Did see its Hopes as in a glass

The other source comes from "Upon Appleton House." In speaking of the cattle, Marvell explains,

> They seem within the polisht Grass
> A landskip drawn in Looking-Glass.[32]

Emerson's "Woodnotes II" bears a strong resemblance to "Upon Appleton House." Emerson develops the portrait of Marvell's "easy philosopher" who confers among the birds and trees, enlarging upon the conception of nature as an oracle and font of knowledge beginning with the stanzas "Heed the old oracles" and "Once again the pine-tree sung :—." These verses closely resemble Marvell's stanzas LXXII and LXXIII.[33] Some nineteenth century critics such as Wordsworth and Landor admired Marvell as the political and religious controversialist of the Restoration. But Emerson perceived Marvell as a nature poet and an interesting forerunner of the romantic movement, and his passionate, witty, elegant lyrics attracted Emerson. Despite these attributes, however,Emerson considered Marvell a less accomplished poet than his favorites Donne and Herbert.

Emerson admired Donne and Herbert more than the other metaphysicals because although he considered them widely different in temperament and outlook, they resembled each other in that both writers practiced religious meditation and wrote pious literature. Emerson's original interpretation of these two poets was remarkably similar to Louis L. Martz's influential argument about seventeenth century meditative poetry. According to Martz, meditative verse developed out of the religious controversies surrounding the Protestant and Counter reformations. Just as formal meditation during this period fell into three distinguishable portions corresponding to the acts of memory, understanding, and will, so meditative poetry developed out of composition, analysis, and colloquy. For the meditative writers, poetry, which involved the deliberate fusion of thought, led to a more sophisticated comprehension of man and his relationship to nature and God. Martz concluded that English poets such as Donne and Herbert used meditative poetry as an exercise for the conduct of the good life and as an indispensable preparation for the achievement of higher spiritual experiences.[34] Emerson similarly interpreted Donne and Herbert as meditative poets and he believed there was a parallel

between their search for the presence of God and his own quest for transcendental truth.

Emerson argued in his lecture "Ethical Writers" (1836) that during the Elizabethan age the "fragrant piety of so great a number of English devotional writers" was caused by their study of Plato and by the religious tendencies of the age. The moral revolution first occurring in Germany, Switzerland, and France crossed the channel during the reign of Henry VIII and finally culminated in civil war a century later. Quoting from Coleridge's *The Stateman's Manual* and *The Friend*, Emerson told his audience that as a result of this moral fervor religious questions dominated the era. The popular sermons of Jeremy Taylor and John Donne were witty and erudite examples of the religious learning and education that produced so many fertile minds of the era. "All these were men of a philosophical mind who had an insight into the moral laws of man's nature from which the thoughtful and serious draw comfort and courage at this hour."[35]

Emerson considered Donne a person whose timeless "gift of a spiritual nature" ranked him with Plato, Paul, and St. Augustine as one of the most inspiring writers in western civilization.[36] The Concord philosopher studied Donne's sermons carefully and concluded that they were a living form to him because the "true work of genius" proceded "out of the wants & deeds of the age as well as the writer."[37] Pale, contemporary Christian sermons, Emerson noted sadly, were truly wanting in ethical and religious advice compared to the seventeenth century divines. Donne's poetry also towered above the shallow writing appearing in respectable journals on both sides of the Atlantic. In the beautiful and exalted poetry of Donne, Emerson concluded, "religion & mirth" stood together, and "like the words of great men, without cant,"[38]

Emerson studied Donne's sermons in the early 1830s, heartily recommended him to his audiences,[39] and claimed that Donne was an important influence on his own work :

> Here are thiugs just hintcd which not one reader in a hundred would take, but which lie so near to the favorite walks of my imagination and to the facts of my sxperience that I read them with a surprise & delight as if I were finding very good things in a forgotton manuscript of my own.[40]

Although Emerson believed that Donne's philosophical arguments sometimes obscured the "beautiful forms & colors of things"[41] poets should write, he considered Donne an out-standing representative of seventeenth century mystic and Neoplatonic poetry. Speaking of Donne's "The Ecstacy," for example, Emerson

was amazed "by the fortitude or self reliance it discovers in the man who dared thus firmly to trust his rare perception, as to write it elaborately out."[42] Donne was one of Emerson's liberating Gods, a bard whose "analogy-loving" soul produced "guidance & consolation" which was still glowing and effective.[43]

Emerson believed Herbert a greater religious poet than Donne because he was a "striking example of the power of exalted thought to melt and bend language to its fit expression."[44] His poetry was the breathing of a devout soul who had a poet's eye and a saint's affections. Emerson compared Herbert to Plato, Paul, Luther, and Thomas A Kempis because he was one of the most religious and poetic individuals who ever wrote about the deity. Herbert represented a "beautiful mean equidistant from the hard sour iron Puritan on one side, & the empty negation of the Unitarian on the other."[45] Most importantly, Herbert awakened the sentiment of piety in Emerson.

> In this age we are learning to look as on chivalry at the sweetness of the ancient piety which makes the genius of ... Herbert It is the spirit of David & of Paul. Who shall restore to use the odoriferous Sabbeths which the sweet spirit bestowed on human life, & which made the earth & the humble roof a sanctity ?[45]

He claimed that Herbert's *The Temple* seemed written for the devotion of angels, and Emerson was happy that this book was popular throughout the seventeeth century and was becoming better known in Victorian England and America.[47]

The debate over the origins of Emerson's poem "Grace" is an excellent example both of Herbert's impact on him and the difficulty in separating the influence of the metaphysicals from other seventeenth century poets, Coleridge's literary criticism, and the romantic movement. Before the *Memoir of Margaret Fuller Ossoli* was published in 1852, coeditor William Henry Channing had inserted "Grace" as a chapter heading and mistakenly attributed it to Herbert. The poem originally had been published in an 1842 issue of the transcendental quarterly *The Dial* :

> How much, Preventing God ! how much I owe
> To the defences than hast round me set :
> Example, custom, fear occasion slow, —
> These scorned bondsmen were my parapet.
> I dare not peep over this parapet
> To gauge with glance the roaring gulf below,
> The depths of sin to which I descended,
> Had not these against myself defended.[48]

Emerson discovered the error and wrote Channing that "For your mottoes to your chapter, I saw that the first had the infinite honor done it of being quoted to Herbert ! The verses are mine so I strike them out."[49] Channing's confusion has been shared by other scholars. Clarence Paul Hotsen first argued that the poem was inspired by the Swedenborgian New Englander, Sampson Reed. G. R. Elliott next challenged Hotsen and suggested the form and imagery of "Grace" were in the Miltonic or at least the seventeenth century style. Subsequently, Norman A. Britten demonstrated the apparent similarity between Emerson's poem and Herbert's "Sinne (I)" :[50]

Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round !
Parents first season us : then Schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws ; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messangers,

Pulpits and Sundayes, sorrow dogging sinne,
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and strategems to catch us in,
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises

* * *

Blessings beforehand, types of gratefulnesse,
The sound of glorie ringing in our eares :
Without our shame; within, our conscience;
Angels and grace. eternall hopes and fears.

Yet all these fences and their whole aray
One cunning bosome-sinne blows quite away.[51]

Modern Emerson scholarship had returned to Channing's insightful attribution.

The connection between the two poems, however, is considerably more complex' Emerson, as John C. Broderick has discovered,[52] probably first read Herbert's poem in Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* where the author retitled the metaphysical poem "Graces vouchsafed in a Christian Land." Although the arguments in the two poems represent the differences between Herbert's piety and Emerson's romanticism, the theme, imagery, title, and style connect "Grace" and "Graces vouchsafed in a Christian Land." Emerson's poem seems to conflict with his doctrine of self-relianse, but if "Sinne (I)" became the source of "Grace," Emerson modified Herbert's devout poem about the power of sin into a characteristically optimistic verse defending the efficacy of God's "defences." Again, in a

typical transmutation, Emerson's knowledge of the metaphysical poets was mediated through Coleridge's romanticism.

Emerson's imitation of "Sinne (I)" and his use of Herbert's other meditative poems was related to the concept of the hieroglyph. Many of Emerson's contemporaries such as Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville expressed a keen interest in Egyptian hieroglyphics.[53] Emerson also also studied them and believed they were pictures that fused the symbolic relationships between the material and the spiritual realms; they denoted a universal sign the true artist intuited by using transcendental Reason. Herbert, Emerson argued, was a great meditative poet whose elaborate analogies and typologies advanced the hieroglyphic tradition. But Emerson ignored Herbert's emblematic attempts to render his poetry both visually and intellectually; instead, Emerson concentrated on his philosophical outlook and arguments. He contended that Herbert realized "the universe is pervaded with secret analogies that tie together its remotest parts."[54] Herbert was not content "with the obvious properties of natural objects" but delighted "in discovering abstruser relations between them and the subject of his thought."[55] His symbolic analogies united man and the cosmos and illuminated their relationship.

Emerson appropriated Herbert's meditative hieroglyphics to illustrate his conviction that there was a congruity between man and nature; the metaphysical poet had read this "riddle of the world with a poet's eye."[56] In Emerson's famous essay "Nature" (1836), Herbert's poem "Man" was quoted twice to show the Platonic correspondence between man and the universe. As Martz has demonstrated, this poem was a classic example of meditative verse. In the opening stanza the faculties of memory and imagination establish the subject of the poem :

My God, I heard this day,
That none doth build a stately habitation,
But he that means to dwell therein.
What house more stately hath their been
Or can be, then is Man ? to whose creation
All things are in decay.

For the next six stanzas Herbert analyzes the wonders of man and their relationship to the universal order of things. Finally, in the last three stanzas Herbert's affections kindle into wonder, love and a final colloquy where God is asked to grant his bountiful favor.[57]

Herbert and his contemporaries had pictured the universe as a great chain of being which stretched from God to the meanest inanimate objects. Man was the nodal point; he had the unique function of binding together all creation by

bridging the apparent chasm between matter and spirit. Among the myriad hieroglyphic correspondences in the universe, that between man and nature was the most fruitful and exciting. In "Nature," "Man" domonstrated the "wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world." Because man is its head and heart, he "finds something of himself in every great and small thing ... which observation or analysis lay open." The perception of this mystery, Emerson argued, inspired the muse of George Herbert. The truths of Herbert's poem explained the eternal attraction that drew men to science, but so long as the scientific method overwhelmed its ends, the "half-sight" of science would always be corrupted and partial by definition. The one-dimensional vision of science vindicated Plato's dictum, which Emerson misrepresented, that poetry came closer to vital truth than other disciplines.[58] In Emerson's aesthetic equation, Herbert and Plato had demonstrated the truths of Reason that scientific Understanding was incapable of seeing. Their analogical view of the world was a deep secret only poets and philosophers could understand.

In his "Demonology" lecture three years later, Emerson again quoted "Man" to show that the universe was pervaded by hieroglyphic analogies between man and nature.

> A man reveals himself in every glance he throws, in every step and movement and rest. Every part of nature represents the whole.
>
> Head with foot hath private amity
> And both with moons and tides.
>
> Not a mathematical axiom but is a moral rule. The jest and by-word to an intelligent ear extends its meaning to the Soul, and to all time.[59]

"Spiritual Laws," the fourth essay in *Essays, First Series* (1841) made the same argument more subtely. Here Emerson attacked the traditional Puritan emphasis on the conscious will and systematized morality; instead, he exalted the hieroglyphic correspondences which frustrated the "superstitions of sense" and the "trick of the senses."[60] In opposition to the snares of Understanding, Emerson glorified subconscious "inclination" and instinct as useful tools for apprehending transcendental Reason. More mystical than the other essays, "Spiritual Laws" defended the moral laws of conscience and spirit that led perceptive individual to realize their unity with the cosmos : "All loss, all pain, is particular; the universe remains to the heart unhurt."[61] Emerson ended the essay by paraphrasing a poem of Herbert's to demonstrate that every action, no matter how insignificant, was part of the divine plan and related to the deepest currents of the universe.

> Let the great soul incarnated in some woman's form, poor and sad and single go out to service and sweep chambers and scour floors, and its effulgent daybeams cannot be muffled or hid and all people will get mops and brooms; until, lo! suddenly the great soul has enshrined itself in some other form and done some other deed, and that is now the flower and head of all living nature.[62]

Emerson's conclusion was based upon Herbert's poem "The Elixer," especially the verses

> Teach me, my God and King,
> In all things thee to see.
> And what I do in any thing,
> To do as it for thee :
>
> * * *
>
> A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgerie divine :
> Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
> Makes that and th' action fine.[63]

Herbert's poems in these essays and other works[64] helped Emerson reveal the pictures in facts and words and the truth behind them. For Emerson, Herbert was the seventeenth century Platonic counterpart to Coleridge who used language and thought to concept spirit and matter. Herbert embodied "what the rhetorician calls the moral sublime."[65] His religious poetry was an elaborate meditative hieroglyph that helped lead Emerson to the conclusion that man could attain flashes of insight into the deity both in man and neture.

Emerson believed his kinship with the metaphysicals was connected with their alleded freedom from classical and Petrarchan idioms and the fresh imagory they drew from nature, travel, and introspection. 'The Concord' sage admired their symbolism, conceits, and especially their meditative analogies between man and nature, matter and spirit, the microcosm and macrocosm, and the finite and the infinite. Both Emerson and the metaphysicals were concerned with the interpenetration between vocation and salvation. Both also believed the poet provided one mode of simultaneously representing and attempting the process of spiritual regeneration. The metaphysical poets were in the pantheon of the liberating Gods because they provided the 'lenses through which we read our own minds."[66] Endowed with superior intellectual perception, these seers and masters of the English language became one of Emerson's models for intellectual and poetic insight.

Although Emerson believed there were great similarities betweeen the metaphysical poets and himself, his too easy acceptance of their work concealed significant philosophical and stylistic differences. The metaphysicals placed themselves within the context of an ordered, hierarchical society and readily accepted the need for institutional mediation between God and man. They certainly would have rejected Emerson's romanticism and his belief in the futility of relying on the state, church, and society for salvation. Their poetic styles also were divergent. Early in his career Emerson admitted he was "born a poet of low class" who sang in a very husky voice resembling prose.[67] While Emerson admired the metaphysicals' poetry, with rare exceptions he could never imitate their style or arguments.

But in the same letter where he recognized his poetic inadequacies, Emerson also insisted "I am a poet in the sense of a perceiver & dear lover of the harmonies that are in the soul & matter, & especially of those correspondences between these & those."[68] Here is where the metaphysical poets had a crucial influence on Emerson's thought, They expanded his idealism by encouraging him to interpret the world organically and analogically. Emerson's thorough study of the metaphysical poets through the refracted lens of Plato and Coleridge's romanticism helped prepare him to proclaim the Immanence of God and the unity of all creation. These liberating Gods armed him against Puritanism, rationalism, and the "empty negation" of Unitarianism.[69] According to Emerson,

> I have for them an affectionate admiration I have for nothing else. They set me on speculations. They move my wonder at myself. They open glimpses of the heaven that is in the intellect I feel the longevity of the mind; I admit the evidence of the immortality of the soul.[70]

While Emerson read Coleridge and Plato, who among other writers helped make his transcendentalism explicit, the metaphysical poets led him to the same perspective.

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68. Ralph Waldo Emerson to Lydia Jackson, February 1, 1835, *Letters of Emerson*, 1 : 435.

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Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol.VII : Nos. 1 - 2 : 1984
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Transcendental Aesthetics: Verses of Experience of a Sage

SEHDEV KUMAR

Shankra, the 9th century Indian mystic-philosopher, writes:

> Erudition, well-articulated speech, a wealth of words, and skills in expounding the scriptures-these things give pleasure to the learned but they don't bring liberation.
>
> Study of scriptures is fruitless as long as *Brahman* has not been experienced. And when *Brahman* has been experienced, it is useless to read the scriptures.[1]

Saint Thomas Aquinas, it is said, laid aside his theology once the supreme vision had settled upon him, saying: 'All that I have written seems to me like straw compared with what has now been revealed to me.'[2]

Before the mystic's experiential knowledge, the intellectual formulations of the scholar and the theologue seem inadeguate, and stand challenged.

No other sage has so persistently, and with such eloquence, invoked the scholars to go beyond the intellectual concepts to the experience of the sacred, as the 15th century saint-poet kabir in India.

> The Vedas
> The rites, the customs
> The tradition
> All are like a stone
> Around one's neck

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O seeker
Lift the stone.[3]

....

O *Pandit*
Of what avail
is all this knowledge
of the Vedas and the Purans ?
Like a donkey
loaded with Sandalwood
How unaware you are
of their fragrance ![4]

As an unlettered. low-caste weaver, Kabir received none of the formal knowledge of the Hindu or Muslim scriptures. Yet in thousands of his songs and couplets-most likely compiled by his two disciples Kabir brings us as close to a sense of the Divine as any sage has done throughout the ages :

The Lord resides in us all
Like the life that is in every seed.
O friend, don't be vain,
Look within :
A million suns are ablaze there,
And oceans and the heavens are all aglow.
Make your self at home,
and all your suffering well vanish.
The unstruck music shall burst forth
And love would permeate everywhere.
Without water
rains will pour,
and pearls would fill the rivers !
O dear friend, love throbs
In all corners of the universe
Open your eyes and see.
Not through the eyes of reason ;
For they see only separation and distinction
Blind they are who sit
In the house of logic and intellect,
O Kabir, how blessed am I,
I sing joyously within my own vessel,
Of the divinity of all things.[5]

Kabir has heen called a monist, an *advaitist*, a Pantheist, a transcendentalist, a

Sufi, a *Nirguni* a *Nath-Panthi*, a *Vaisnava*, a *Tantric*, and so on and on. There is not a stream of spritual thought that has not somehow found a sympathetic chord in Kabir. Indeed he encompasses them all. like the ocean that receives water from all rivers. But his vision is not circumscribed by any one of them. Like the transcendental Reality that he seeks, beyond names and beyond attributes, Kabir too is not to be caught in any labels or "isms". If he is to be given any name at all, he should be called, as he suggests himslf, a *premi* : a Lover. Kabir is a lover, in love with the Divine :

O dear friend
A real seeker is one who gets
caught in no school of thought, monism
and dualism alike,
For no system of philosophy
can comprehend Him.
Just as one strand is attached to another,
So all life is inter-woven.
O Brother
He understands who does not stand aloof
For he is one with One, and he sees
Through the eyes of love.
There is no other way.
To see the Whole, one must be Whole
So Whole it remains.[6]

Fifteenth century India was ridden with many strifes between the Hindus and the Muslims. The holy city of Kashi where Kabir lived was a hot-bed of the *pandits* and the *brahmans* ; theological debates and idol worship were rampant, The *untouchables* and the low caste men and women like Kabir, were greatly shunned and barred from all spiritual knowledge. In the brilliant light of Kabir's vision, however, anyone or anything that darkened the face of Truth, though charlatanism or cleverness, dogma or habit, stood exposed :

Look at him, the Yogi,
How he has dyed his attire
And yet not a drop of love
has touched him.
With pierced ears, and a long beard,
How like a goat he looks !
Reciting the *Gita*
An empty, endless chatterer ![7]

....
There are thousands of scriptures
But all useless
Take my word :
Throw them into a well.
O seeker, he who is not free himself
How can he talk of freedom to others ?8
....
In this city, there are many a man
Some scholars of the *Vedas*
Some steeped in melancholy.
There are ascetics
and there are hedonists
Some are given to alcohol
Some to mind-altering drugs.
There are *siddhas*
and there are pilgrims
Sadhus, *pirs* and *Yogis*
Brahmans, priests and *pandas*
Alas, All lost in the webs
of *maya*
Unaware ! Unconscious !9

Kabir's insistence on the Experience of the Sacred as the primary spiritual pursuit finds expression in his songs again and again :

The Purans and the Koran,
O seeker, are only words,
They reveal not,
For lifting up the curtain
I have seen.
Truth is to be experienced, O Kabir
All else is a mere shabow. 10
O dear friend
Why speak with a clever tongue ?
Leaving the straight road,
Why go on a crooked path ?
Listen : He encompasses everything
And yet He is Nothing.
They say He is immortal, He is omnipresent
Yet they see Him not and He remains

hidden from them.
It is true that He has no colour, no form.
But he resides in all things, and thus
All colours are His, and He has all forms.
Without a beginning, Without an end is He
Beyond time
Beyond colour and form,
Beyond death and immortality
Beyond and beyond
O Brother
Beyond
And so near is He !11
Not from the scriptures
do I quote
I describe
Only
What I have seen
with my own eyes
Experience, O seeker
is the essence
of all things
When the bride
is in the arms
of her Lover
Who cares
About the wedding party !12

The body of poetical work attributed to Kabir is large and varied ; for decades, there has been much debate about the authenticity of the various verses, However Kabir's verses are utterances of a visionary, rather than literary compositions. As such in all of his work, there are no narratives or allegories, epics or fables, commentaries or arguments. Only a raw, roaring, rhapsodic outburst of his experience of the Divine !

He is like this or He is like that,
O dear friend, those are more abstractions
If I say He is only within,
The whole creation would seem illusory
If I say He is without,
Then the One

Who makes all this creation real,
Would be false.
In truth, outside, inside,
He is everywhere,
But neither intellect nor sight
can know Him
And the books reveal
Him not
But those who understand,
Understand,
And others, I know
Would believe me not.

Kabir neither needs nor renders any intellectual proofs to establish the 'reality' of his Beloved. Like the celestial perfumes that filled the cell of St. Catherine of Siena, or the physical wounds experienced by St. Teresa and St. Francis, or the music that echoed in the ears of Richard Rolle, or the light that Suso 'saw', Kabir sees Him 'Face to Face', as *Saksat Isvara*.

O seeker
His splendour
is beyond imagination
And all words
belie the sight
Why argue and speculate
Why not see Him
Face to Face ?
Will that not be
the proof of all proofs !14

Kabir has been hailed as "a great poet, one of the greatest in India. As a mystical poet, he has probably never been surpassed."15 Yet Kabir was first and foremost a visionary ; poetry was a mere "by-product" of his vision. His verses thus require at every step, a higher *subjectivity*, the necessity of 'seeing the Beloved through the eyes of the lover.' As such Kabir's poetry, as that of other sages, is of an entirely different genre than those of the poets. In the words of William Kingland :

> The mystic may not always be a master or language, but it is the truth which he endeavours to express that we should do well to seize ; and learn also to make a proper allowance for the inadequacy of language to express the deepest truths. No one knows better than the greatest master of technic how inadequate are the materials with which he has

to work ; no one realises more clearly than the greatest master of language, how little language can express of the living truth with which his inmost nature is on fire.[16]

Kabir composed thousands of exquisite songs and couplets but he never ceased from saying that the experience of the sacred was 'beyond all the Vedas, the scriptures, the Koran, the chanting and the rosaries, the temples and the mosques Beyond and Beyond.' It is beyond, he said, even his own poems and all the metaphors that they employ. By lifting poetry thus from the real of the ordinary human consciousness, Kabir made it truly the voice of gods. To do so, he employed many concrete symbols and myths and metaphors, but often even they seemed inadequate to convey the 'total otherness of the experience of the holy .'

On many such occasions there is a clear breakdown of all language, as Kabir resorts to the 'language of absurdity' that renders itself to no understanding, easy or otherwise. Sometimes there is an inversion, an obvious contrariness : 'a lotus that blossoms without water', 'a river that is drowned in the boat,' the son of a barren woman,' the oil cozing out of sand', Such modes or expression have been called *ulatabamsis*, 'the language of inversion', There have been several valiant attempts to 'decode' such utterances but they remain largely elusive. This 'absurd or paradoxical use of language is sometimes referred to as *sandhya-bhasa*, the twilight language', the language that mediates, like twilight, between light and darkness. It is not merely an allegorical style ; its absurd enigmatic quality may be a deliberate attempt to allude to the transcendental nature of the mystical experience.[17]

This intentional hotch-potch of words and concepts by Kabir need not necessarily be viewed as a new challenge to one's intellect ; it may be a way—an unorthodox one, no doubt -of indicating the realms of Knowledge that lie beyond intellect. The Greek author Kazantzakis once wrote that words are a prison but God is free. Kazantakis too may be echoing the Upanishadic strain of *neti, neti*- 'not this', 'not this' against words and concepts that aspire to contain everything, even the experience of the holy.

Kabir's *ultabamsis* thus call our attention not so much to their absurd and contradictory nature but to the futility of words to express the Experience of the *'Beyond* and the *Beyond'* .

In one way or another, all traditions in mystical poetry have cautioned us against considering words as 'the vehicle of Truth' ; the mystical experience remains ineffable. It is said that after composing the *Puranas* and the *Mahabharat*, the great sage Vyas begged of the gods for forgiveness for attempting' to make the invisible visible, the all-pervasive localized and the ineffable articulated'.[18]

Through his verses, Kabir too was attempting to make the *Real* accessible. But all his verses, fade into oblivion in the face of the experience of the holy :

Like a dumb man
Having tasted the sweetest of fruits
I can say nothing
But only smile.[19]

There is a zen sayng : 'The finger that points at the moon is not the moon.' Through his verses, Kabir is only pointing at the 'moon'. Once one looks at the moon, all the pointers and even the moon itself lose their significance.

Kabir's *sakhis* and *padas* thus bring us only so far, and then there is an inevitable silence :

O dear friends
I have said all
that could be said
Now, no more
The words and tne *sakhis*
are all useless,
Washed away
in the torrents of love.
No more
No more
There is nothing more to say
He is this, He is that
He is solid, He moves
All these are words of ignorance
One utters them only
so long as one has not seen Him.
O Kabir
Now there is nothing
Nothing
But the One ![20]

Here are a few of the most celebrated of Kabir's *sakhis* that speak of his Experience beyond the words :[21]

1. Ah, there is
many a scholar
Who has read
All the scriptures,
But only rarely
is there
A man of knowledge
O dear friend
To be a man of knowledge
One needs to understnd
Only one word :
Love.

2. O *Brahmnan*, I say
What I have seen
With my own eyes,
And you keep quoting
the scriptures

I speak
to unravel
the mystery
But you insist
on keeping it
tangled

How can our paths
cross ?

3. O Kabir
Why not leave
the scriptures alone,
All this learning
leads
Only to a dead end

Unless you are imbued
with His love,
O dear friend
Why shout His name
In the dark ?

4. God is like
a necklace of pearls,
Held together
With a delicate thread

By scriptural debates
You will get
this necklace
entagled
With your logic
it may even
fall to pieces.

5. Passion, anger
Agitation, avarice
So long as one
is possessed by them,

O my friend
There is
little distinction
Between a fool
and a scholar.

6. Not by cleverness
Or intellectual gymnastics,
does one see
Tht face of the Lord

O seeker
This is the essence
of all teachings :
Only he who yearns for
His love relentlessly
is sought by Him
For His embrace.

7. O Kabir
God is like a tree,
A man who is
free of all shackles
Is its fruit

A seeker who has
abandoned
scriptural debates
Is the shade
of this tree.
Ah, what shelter
he provides
For a weary traveller !

8, What a stone
you have become
in intellectual pursuits,
Not a drop of love
has touched you

O Kabir, remember
Without love

It is all worthless
And dreary.

9. Ah, what song of love
has burst forth
Yet what silence
has descended
upon me

Like a dumb man,
Having tasted
the sweetest of fruits
I can merely smile
But say nothing.

10. My Lover
How shall I
describe His face ?
Who would believe
my words, anyway ?

O dear friend
Why not leave
the words alone ?
He is as He is ;
Just rejoice
in His sight.

11. Mysterious Hs is,
And O seeker, let this
mystery remain

Why waste your breath ?
Even the *Vedas*
and the *Koran*
have failed
to describe Him,
Then who would
believe your words ?

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14. *sakhi* VII. 13.
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17. Mircea Eliade calls *Sandhyabhasa* as a 'process of destroying and reinventing language' till we find ourselves in 'a universe of analogies, homologies and double meanings.' *Yoga Life and Immortality*, London, 1958, pp. 294-5.

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21. All *sakhis presented* here are from this author's The *Vision of Kabir*, *op. cit.*

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Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol.VII : Nos. 1 - 2 : 1984
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"Wilde's Salome : Survival in a Hothouse"

PIERRE HAN

In june of 1892—wnen *Solomé* was undergoing rehearsals for production at the Palace Theatre in London with Sarah Bernhardt in the titl erole and Albert Darmont as Hérode—the Lord Chamberlain withheld his permission for performance on the grounds that the play dealt with biblical characters. Such a censure, of course, was not the exclusive prerogative of English manners. Across the channel, Racine's biblical plays, Gounod's *La Reine de Saba*, Saint-Saéns' *Samson et Dalila* and Mossenet's *Hérodiade* suffered a similar fate, but the controversy associated with these works was of a less vehement nature. The works, not the artiste, were singled out for special attention.

In the case of *Salomé*, however, the integrity of the writer was the issue at hand : not artistic integrity but moral probity. Wilde countered the censure by an appeal to the doctrine of art for art's sake and by a defense of the in violability of works meant to be performed on the stage.[1]

> I care very little about the refusal of the Lord Chamberlain to allow my play to be produced. what I do care about is this Censorship apparently regards the stage as the lowest of all the arts, and looks on acting as a vulgar thing. The painter is allowed to take his subjects where he chooses. He can go to the great Hebrew and Hebrew-Greek literature of the Bible and can paint *Salomé* dancing or Christ on the Cross or the Virgin with her Child. Nobody interferes with the painter. Nobody says, 'Painting is such a vulgar art that you must not paint sacred things.' The sculptor is equally free. He can carve.

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> St. John the Baptist in his camel hair, and fashion the Madonna or Christ in bronze or in marble as he wills. Yet nobody says to him, 'Sculpture is such a vulgar art that you must not carve sacred things.' And the writer, the poet—he also is quite free. I can write about any subject that I choose. For me there is no Censorship. I can take aby incident I like out of sacred literature and treat it as I choose and there is no one to say to the poet, 'Poetry is such a vulgar art that you must not use it in treating sacred subjects.' But there is a Censorship over the stage and acting ; and the basis of that Censorship is that, while vulgar subjects may be put on the stage and acted, while everything that is mean and low and shameful in life can be portrayed by actors, no actor is to be permitted to present under artistic conditions the great and ennobling subjects taken from the Bible. The insult is the suppression of *Salomé* is an insult to the stage as a form of art and not to me.[2]

Wilde's justification is ostensibly based upon the appeal of his work ar an art form and not as a vendetta against the artist qua person. The eloquence of the language, though, does not completely disguise the unsavory atmosphere in which *Salomé* was born, grew and finally came to maturity. This was not a natural flower that was characterized by spontaneity, but rather a hothouse blossom that depended for its existence upon artificial nurturing.

Wilde's aesthetic sentiments were echoed by William Archer, probably the only critic of the time to take issue with the Lord Chamberlain's censure of the play :

> It is by methods borrowed from music that Mr. Wilde, without sacrificing its suppleness, imparts to his prose the firm cexture, so to speak, of verse. Borrowed from music—may i conjecture ?—through the intermediation of Maeterlinck. Certain it is that the brief phrases, the chiming repetitions, the fugal effects beloved by the Belgian poet, are no less characteristic of Mr. Wilde's method. I am quite Willing to believe if necessary, that the tow artists invented their similar devices independently, to meet a common need ; but if, as a matter of fact the one had taken a hint from the other, I do not see that his essential originality is thereby impaired. There is far more depth and body in Mr. Wilde's work than in Maeterlinck 's. His characters are men and women, not filmy shapes of mist and moonshine. His properties, so to speak, are far more various and less conventional. His palette—I recur, in spite of myself to the pictorial analogy—is infinitely

> richer. Maeterlinck paints in washes of water colour; Mr. Wilde attains the depth and brilliancy of oils.[3]

One might easily take issue with Archer for praising Wilde to the detriment of Maeterlinck. Certainly the Belgian *Pelléas* has, since its literary creation, stood for the embodiment of the late nineteenth-century Symbolist movement. Wilde's play can lay claim to no such direct lineage ; its greatness lies elsewhere.

One topic that is frequently neglected in an analysis of *Salomé*—and one that accounts in small measure for its success—is the version of the text to which the critic might refer. One must not forget that the play underwent a rather unusual form of genesis in terms of linguistic development and adaptation. In the first place, there is a question as to the actual manguage in which the drama was originally conceived, even though the language in which it first appeared was French. According to one of the standard biographical accounts, the work came into being in a somewhat flamboyant manner :

> over lunch one day Oscar told the storry in detail to a group of French writers. When he returned to his apartment, he noticed a blank book lying upon a table whereupon he began to write out his play, He wrote steadily until ten or eleven at night. Finding himself in need of some nourishment, he interrupted his composition and went to a nearby cafe. He asked the orchestra leader to play music in harmony with a play he was writing about 'a woman dancing with her bare feet in the blood of a man she has craved for and slain.' The orchestra leader played such strange and terrifying music that all conversation in the restaurant ceased and the listeners 'looked at each other with blanched faces.'[4]

The play was written in 1891 ; the first published version in French did not appear until tow years later ; finally, the English "translation" by Lord Alfred Douglas, which Wilde found unsatisfactory, was published in 1894. But in spite of this historical information, we cannot be absolutely certain as to the "real" language of *Salomé*. And therein lies part of the attraction, part of the seductiveness of the ambiguous literary text. Wilde himself provided only a partial answer :

> My idea of writing the play was simply this : I have one instrument that I know that I can command, and that is the English language. There was another instrument to which I had listened all my life, and I wanted once to touch this new instrument to see whether I could make any beautiful thing out of it. The play was written in Paris some six months ago, where I read it to some young poets who admired it

> immensely. of course there are modes of expression that a Frenchman of letters would not have used, but they give a certain relief or colour to the play. A great deal of the curious effect that Maeterlinck produces comes from the fact that he, a Flamand by race, writes in an alien language. The same thing is true of Rossetti who, though he wrote in English, was essentially Latin in temperament.[5]

Both Maeterlinck and Rossetti do not quite fit into the same category as Wilde, for they commanded French and English in a way that somehow escaped the Irish poet.

As a hypothetical speculation, one wonders why Wilde did not make his own translation from French into English. As one critic put it, "*Salomé* "does credit to Mr. Wilde's command of the French langnage, bnt we must say that the opening scene reads to us very much like a page from one of Ollendorff's exercises."[6] One cannot but sense that the playwright's linguistic idiom is an acquired rather than a natural form of expression. In order to be more authentic in this matter, Wilde sent his manuscript to some French critics—among them Pierre Louys and André Gide—for their suggestions, corrections, and English locutions that had slipped into French. The text remains a quizzical document to which the inevitable question mark adheres. As a result, the problem of which remains the authentic text—the French, the English or the pre-linguistic creative surge—will probably never be known in its entirety.

What does appear to be less complicated is the difference that obtains between Wilde's French and the idiom of a native-born master of the language. One need only consider a sonnet entitled "La Danse" by Pierre Louys. This poem was officially a gesture of thanks sent to Wilde who had dedicated the oaiginal French play to the French poet.

> A travers le brouillard lumineux des sept voiles
> La courbe de son corps se cambre vers la lune.
> Elle se touche avec sa chevelure brune
> Et ses doigts caressants ou luisent des étoiles.
> Le réve d'être un paon qui déploierait sa queue
> La fait sourire sous son évantail de plumes.
> Elle danse au milieu d'un tourbillon d'écumes
> Ou flotte l'arc léger de son écharpe bleue.
>
> Près que nue, avec son dernier voile, flot jaune,
> Elle fuit, revient, tourne, et passe. Au bord du trone
> Le tétrarque tremblant la supplie et l'appelle,

Fugitive, qui danse avec des roses rares
Et traine dans le sang sous ses beaux pieds barbares
L'ombre terrible de la lune derrière elle.[7]

What is unique, and, of course, perfectly understandable, is the thoroughly natural flow of language that characterizes Louys' dedication. Within the confines of this rather stringent form of fourteen lines, he has created a fascinating cameo of one of the most provocative women to be found in the disciplines of art, literature and music. Without the least trace of self-consciousness, the poet unfolds th the developing wantonness of this daughter of Herodias. The culmination of this dramatic process may be found in a scene which has, beyond all others, become the trademark of the Salomé legend. More often than not, the "Dance of the Seven Veils" is perfomred as an entity unto itself and is thereby removed from the context of the drama, It is merely a sensually erotic experience. There is a tendency on the part of the artist to forget the *ambiance* out of which the dance emerges. Furthermore, many of the translations of the Vulgate from the original Greek into Latin and other languages have been incorrect as far as the historical accuracy of the real Salomé of the Gospels is concerned, a woman of "high ethical character, moral sensibility, and refined social dignity "[8]

From the first stanza to the last, one experiences though the poetry of Louys the inevitability of what has befallen the characters : the suicide of Narraboth, Captain of the Guard ; the horrible fate that has befallen Iokanaan ; the equally merciless death in store for Salome at the hands of Herode's soldiers, The marvelous flow of the language, infinitely more suggestive than any litteral description of the experience, is one of pure symbolism.

Though Wilde is cited as one of the exemplars of the doctrine of art for arts's sake, his relationship to Naeterlinck and the Symbolists, is not, as far as I can discern conclusive. Wide's poetry in this play is not so much mysterious of nebulous or gauzy as it is brilliant and sensational and highly colored : a hothouse blossom. The effect of the language depends primarily upon the cumulative tension and weight of special grammatical constructions. It is perhaps in Herode's exhortation to Salome to accept his gifts for the dance that Wilde's technique shows itself most distinctly, especially the repetition of the subject verb-object sequence that has a forceful, relentless concatenation :

Ecoutez. J' ai des bijoux cachés ici que meme votre mère n'a jamais vus, et des bijoux tout a fait extraordinaires. J' ai un collier de perles a quatre rangées. On dirait des lunes enchainees de rayons d'argent. On dirait cinquate lunes captives dans un filet d'or. Une reine l'a porté sur l'ivoire de ses seins. Toi. quand tu le porteras, tu seras aussi belle

qu' une reine. J'ai des améthystes de deux espèces. Une qui est noire comme le vin. L' autre qui est rouge comme du vin qu'on a colore avec de l'eau. J'ai des topazes jaunes comme les yeux des tigres, et des topazes rases comme les yeux des pigeons- et des topazes vertes comme les yeux des chats. J'ai des opales qui attristent les esprits et ont peur des ténèbres. J'ai des onyx semblables aux prunelles d'une morte. J'ai des selénites qui changent quand la lune change et deviennent pales quand elles voient le soleil. J'ai des saphirs grands comme des oeufs et bleus comme des fleurs bleues. La mer erre dedans et la lune ne vient jamais troublei le bleu de ses flots. J'ai des chrysolithes et des béryls, j'ai des chrysoprases et des rubis, j'ai des sardonyx et des hyacinthes, et des calcedoines, je vous les donnerai tous, mais tous, et j'y ajouterai d'autres choses. Le roi des Indes vient justement de m'envoyer quatré eventails faits de plumes d'autruche. J'ai un crystal qu l n' est pas permis aux femmes de voir et que meme les jaunes hommes ne doivent regarder qu' après avoir été flagelles de verges. Dans un coffret de nacre, j'ai trois turquoises merveilleuses. Quand on les porte snr le front on peut imaginer des choses qu,il n'existent pas, et quand on les porte dans la main on peut rendre lessfemmes steriles. Ce sont des tresors de grande valeur.[9]

Evidently the earlier, uncorrected manuscript must have contained an even greater number of repetitions, a fact attested to be Adolphe Rette, the author of *Le Symbolisme, Anecdotes et Souvenirs* : "Je fis supprimer a Wilde une trop longue enumeration de pierreries mise dans la bouche d'Hérode."[10] Another editor of the text, Stuart Merrill, was less enthusiastic obout Wilde's French. "Il ecrivait le francais comme il le parlait, c'est-a-dire avec une fantaisie qui, si elle etait savoureuse dans la convoursation aurait produit, au theatre, une deplorable impression Je corrigea donc comme je pus *Salomé*.[11]

The English "version", which seems to run a trifle more smoothly, also maintains the effect of cumulative repetition :

> Listen. I have jewels hidden in this place—hewels that thy mother even has never seen ; jewels that are marvellous to look at. I have a collar of pearls, set in four rows. They are like unto moons chained with rays of silver. They are even as half a hundred moons caught in a golden net. On the ivory breast of a queen they have rested. Thou shalt be as fair as a queen when thou wearest them. I have amethysts of two kinds ; one that is black like wine, and one that is red like wine that one has coloured with water. I have topazes yellow as are the eyes of tigers, and topazes that are pink as the eyes of a

wood-pigeon, and green topazes that are as the eyes of cats. I have opala that burn always, with a flame that is cold as ice, opals that make sad men's minds, and are afraid of the shadows. I have onyxes like the eyeballs of a dead woman. I have moonstones that change when the moon changes, and are wan when they see the sun. I have sapphires big like eggs, and as blue as blue flowers The sea wanders within them, and the moon comes never to trouble the blue of their waves. I have chrysolites and beryls, and chrysoprases and rubies ; I have sardonyx and hyacinth stones, and stones of cnalcedony, and I will give them all unto thee, and other things will I add to them. The king of the Indies has but even now sent me four fans fashioned from the feathers of parrots, and the king of Numidia a garment of ostrich feathers. I have a crystal, into which it is not lawful for a woman to look, nor may young men behold it until they have been beated with rods. In a coffer of nacre I have theree wondrous turquoises. He who wears them on his forehead can imagine things which are not, and he who carries them in his hand can turn the fruitful woman into a woman that is barren. These are great treasures.12

What differentiates the English from the French text is the exploitation of a biblical style by a "principle of implied relations analogous to the technique of Hebrew poetry. The syntax of the Scriptures is essentially artificial and 'constructive','as scholars have pointed out. It consists of a mode of juxtaposing ideas whereby relations are expressed with hardly of the connectives that usually bind thought-units in a normal sentence , , , This effect is produced through accumulation by the parallel placement of syntactical members."13

Interestingly enough, it is not the French of Wilde or the English of Douglas that has proved the most durable. Richard Strauss's libretto to his opera *Salome* goes beyond the tenets of *fin-de-siècle* art and quasi-biblical rhetoric.

Hore, In habe an diesem Ort Juwelen versteckt, Juwelen die selbst deine Mutter nie gesehen hat. Ich habe ein Halsband mit vier Reihen Perlen, Topase, gelb wie die Augen der Tiger. Topase, hellrot wie die Augen der Waldtaube, and grune Topase, wie Katzenaugen. Ich habe Opale, die immer fulkeln, mit einem Feuer, kalt wie Eis. Ich will dir alle geben, alle ! Ich habe Chrysolithe und Berylle, Chrysoprase une Rubine. Ich habe sardonyx und Hyacinthsteine und Steine von Chalcedon. Ich will sie dir alle geben alle und noch andre Dinge. Ich habe einen Kristall In den zu schaun keinem Weibe vergonnt ist. In einem Perlenmutterkastchen habe ich drei wunderbare Turkise

Wer sie an seiner Stirne tragt, kann Dinge sehn, die nicht wirklich sind. Es sind uabezanlbara Schatza.[14]

Fortunately, Strauss has, in this parallel passage, pruned some of the original dialogue and retained only what was necessary for his own mode of expression. It must be remembered that he has added a new dimension to the traditional experience, the traditional *muthos*. That significant dimension, out of which his text springs, is that of music. That which is incapable of being expressed in words is given renewed verification by the appeal of another medium. The atmosphere of mysteria that reflects the action and the characters receives its fullest expression in this *dramma per musica*, a unique blending of tone and text.[15] It is here that Wilde's hothouse flower finds its most congenial abode, for both the French and English texts are fulfilled in a way that could not have been possible in a single art form. But that is another story.

Notes and References

1. For a discussion of this work in relation to the doctrine of art for art's sake, see Helen Grace zagora, *The Legend of Salome and the principle of Art for Art's Sake* (Geneva : E. Droz, 1960), especially pp. 121-135.
2. A published interview by Wilde in Stuart Mason, *Bibliography of Oscar Wilde* (London : Bertram Rota, 1967), pp. 371-72.
3. William Archer, "Mr. Wilde's New Play," *Black and White*, 4 (May ll, 1893), p. 209—quoted by Donald H. Ericksen, *Oscar Wilde* (Boston : Twayne Publishers, 1977), p. 124.
4. Ericksen, pp. 122-23: See also Michael Hardwick, *The Drake Guide to Oscar Wilde* (New York : Drake Publishers, Inc.), p. 167.
5. Mason, pp. 372-73.
6. Review in the *Times*, February 23, 1893, in Mason, p. 376.
7. Pierre Louys, *Poemes*, ed. Yves-Gérard le Dantect (Paris : Albin Michel, 1945), I, p. 87. The variants to this text which appear on p. 341 reflect the alternate text of the poem (entitled "Salomé") which appears in Mason' p. 375.
8. Blaise Hospodar de Kornitz, *Salome : Virgin or Prostitute* ? (New York : Pageant Press, 1953), p. 12. See also pp. 9, 44, 60 61, 64.
9. The 1893 text of *Salomé* (Paris : Editions du Colombier, 1966), pp. 77-78.
10. Oscar Wilde, *Letters*, ed. Robert Hart-Davis (New York : Harcourt, Brace, World), p. 305, note l.
11. *Ibid.*

12. *Salome*, in Oscar Wilde, *Works* (New York : Lam Publishing Co., 1909), VII, 79-81 ; rpt. AMS Press, Inc,, New York, 1972.
13. Epifanio San Juan, Jr.. *The Art of Oscar Wilde* (Princeton : University Press, 1967), p. 114.
14. The 1905 text of Richard Strauss, *Salome*, trans. Hedwig Lachmann (New York : Boosey and Hawkes, 1968), p. 20.
15. For a discussion of Strauss's opera see Gary Schmidgall, *Literature as Opura* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1980 , pp. 249-286,

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BOOK REVIEWS

Suresh Raval *Metacritcism* Athens : The University of Georgia Press, 1981, PP xiv +289, $ 18.00

If Criticism is "Statement about works of art" (Beardsley) metacrticism is statement about criticism. In the last chapter of his book Raval elaborates the theoretical and methodological implications of the concept of metacriticism. The critics who engage in analysis of the problems of criticism function as metacritics. But the critical theorists who attempt at providing the foundations for their presumed correct theories are not metacritics. "Metacriticism and critical theory are logically independent of each other, but they are not in compatible" (P. 239)

The most remarkable quality of the book under review is its clarity (which Professor Hayden White rightly notices) lack of the so called rigorousness which some critics unnecessarily exhibit and admire (Shusterman).

Raval sets out to make a thorough-going analysis of the logic of criticism through an examination of certain fundamental concepts of literary theory and practice of criticism. The aim is to show that critical concepts, however logically developed and valorized, are, in reality, closely bound up with the historical specificily of the critic. But this does not preclude rationality in critical response : it rather makes for the genuiness of critical disputes and the natural relativity of all literary formulations. Raval's book thus purports to be an interesting contribution to the valuable body of current theorizing concerning the nature and value of criticism.

The book is divided into two parts dealing separately with the theory and practice of criticism. The first part opens with a chapter on the aesthetics of Kant and the idealists and leads on to metacritical analysis of the concepts of creativity, in fuition autonomy and affective response. Dr. Raval scrutinizes each concept meticulously and exhaustively and shows these all to be "contested concepts" which can yet be "reconfiscated" to appear with considerable differences in their later articulations. Dr. Raval, for example, is illuminating on the controversy about in tention and shows that although the dispute cannot be settled, it is possible to recharacterize and refine the rival theories of the New Critics on the one hand and those of the Geneva School, Gadamer and Hirsch on the other. Dr. Raval treats the other concepts with similar perceptiveness.

On examining the theories of interpretation, Dr. Raval rightly argues that criticism is not a 'science' despite Richards and Frye, although its rationality cannot be disputed. This part of the book is an exhaustive analysis of the theories of Ingarden, Gadamer, Hirsch, Bloom and others in one long chapter and a separate chapter is devoted to Derrida,

de Man and the deconstructionists. The discussion on deconstruction is a sensible and valuable 'placing' of Derrida and his cohorts : without denying the radicality of their thought, it shows how they shave some "logically" parallel absurdities with the idealistic aesthetic theorists. Dr. Raval rounds up asserting the inadequacy of all monolithic critical schemes and pleads for an intelligent metacriticism for exposing such schemes. The variety, exhaustiveness and wisdom of Dr. Raval's book are rather rare and one would wish for more of them from Dr. Raval in future.

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T. P. Ramachandran, *The Indian Philosophy of Beauty*, pt. I pp. xviii+104, pt. II pp. 152, University of Madras, Madras. India, Rs. 10 00 and Rs. 13-00.

Since De and Kune several books have been written on the fundamentals problems and essential features of Indian aesthetics. But the tedious technicalization involved in the method of approach and the rehashive monotony in the act of analysis very often make the works inaccessible to the readers without sufficient traditional learning in Sanskrit language. On the other hand, some pretensive comparatists create to great a confusion in their parallelling the Sanskrit Concepts and theories with those of the western criticism that the reader drowns himself helplessly in the middle of the torrentous streams of thoughts losing both the banks- where from he starts and where he aspires to reach. But the present work of Ramachandran is remarkably free from all such blesmishes. He never pretends to be a comparatist although his untraditional and yet faithful treatment of the subject simplification and modernization of the notorious Sanskrit Jargons and critical concepts sufficiently prove the depth of his understanding of and insight into the universal status of Indian aesthetics

The first part deals with the general featares of Indian aesthetics justifying the necessity of a sense and philosophy of beauty in the judgement of values clarifying the differenence between the beauty in nature and the beauty in artworks and analyzing the triangular relation among the artist, art work and aesthete.

The second part is more specifiic in dealing with the well-known but often confused concepts and jargons of Sanskrit criticism such as bhava, rasa and dhvani, Not a single Sanskrit quotation is there in this part except for the bracketted technical terms; but the very analysis proves his mastery over both language and thought. His interpretation of *alanikara* as both the mental construct or mental imagery of the poet and its exepression in figures of speech is both original and provocative. One feels sufficiently inspired for comparing *citrakavya* with imagist poetry not without justifications. The difference between the fact as such and the fact as idealization or a mental construct reshapes the Sanskrit concepts of *vastu* and *alanikara* so as to

view that in the light of current researches in poetics. The precise treatment of the Concept of *dhvani* with its verietcis under three categoreis *vyanigya*, vyanjaka and *vyanjana* is sound and sufficient. one expects certainly something more about the relevance of this theory in the present context of elaborate researches in linguistic methods when one asks very sensible questions Such as whether *dhvani* is a *meaning* or *Communication* when modern linguists have Contrasted Suggestion against meaning it is high thine for our quesion whether *dhvani* can be suggestion and yet a meaning (*arthantaram*). But the very Scheme of the book implies that it is a work of exposition rather than of critique.

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Jean—Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi; Foreword by Fredric Jameson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, XXV + 110 pp., $ 8. 95.

In the introductory chapter to this slim but dense volume Lyotard defines postmodernism as an "incredulity toward metanarratives." The "condition" denoted in the title refers to the contemporary status of knowledge; knowledge for Lyotard is primarily scientific but also the basis for normative claims. Lyotard argues that knowledge is now marked by a crisis precipitated by questions about the legitimacy and proper role of narrative. This crisis arose from a loss ef faith in the explanatory potential of narrative.

Although the decline of faith in narrative is prompted by the search for legitimacy, the failure to accord narrative a legitimating role in scientific knowledge serves in turn to undermini not only the prospect of a scientific certainty but also any prospects for normative legislation or self-knowledge. Lyotard endorses this loss of legitimacy and embraces postmodernism as both a liberating condition for knowledge and as a method for destroying the remaining faith in grand Narrative, i. e., metanarrative.

Lyotard's quarrel here is not with narrative per se; for he thinks narrative is a kind of knowledge at least as legitimate as scientific inquiry. Narrative, which he understands as a fundamentally finite and local development, was forced to bear the undue weight of the more grandiose claims which scientific knowledge pressed upon its shoulders. Metanarratives are Frankensteins engineered by science through an abuse of narrative. In reality, scientific knowledge has always been in competition with narrative. "Narration is the quintessential form of customary knowledge." For Lyotard modernity is the fiirst condition that suffered a loss of meaning due to the loosening grasp that knowledge has on its principal form, narrative. Postmodernity would then be not the return to a pre-modern "meaningful" condition but instead the acceptance of the limited purview of "meaningfulness" and a fiinal nay-saying to the dwindling faith in the comforting illusion of a metanarrative.

Lyotaid rejects tow of the reigning models of legitimation : the first is the theory of scientific legitimation, derived from Wittgenstein, based an performativity; the second is the model of legitimation as consensus, associated with Habermas. The problem with the performativity modet is that it presupposes an overly stable system from which judgments of legitimacy issue. Performativity becomes the game of technology which has as its telos not truth but efficiency. The excess stability of this system rests upon the terror of a totalitarianism : "This is how legitimation by power takes shape." Lyotard's argument against the Habermasian model of legitimation through consensus is twofold : Since language games are finite and heteromorphous it is simply wrongheaded to search for metaperscriptives to inform a quest for universal consensus; secondly, it is not consensus but paralogy that is the true telos of discourse. More damning to Habermas than either of these objections is the observation that his theory of legitimation situates itself wholly witnin a narrative of emancipation. This narrative, being a spiritual son of Hegel, also suffers from the congenital defect perperated by the subject upon Nature.

Although Lyotard rejects both these models, he nevertheless retains important elements of each in fashioning his own prescription for postmodern knowledge. He retains the Habermasian concern for justice and an open-ended species of performativity. His model "would respect both the desire for justice and the desire for the unknown." Imagination becomes the key term in this renovation of prescriptive epistemology. Imugination depends upon the willingness to paralogically assert. One thus needs to request this willingness from the players in current scientific activity. "The only legitimation that can make this kind of request admissible is that it will generate idea>, in other words, new statements." Legitimation proceeds from paralogy.

To facilitate the request for paralogy Lyotard asks that all data banks be open to the public. The difficulty in this request is that it presupposes a public composed of individuals not only interested but also capable of intervening in the oonstruction of knowledge by making imaginative, paralogical moves within the existing language games. This is perhaps the least well-founded aspect of Lyotard's presentation.

Lyotard's article, "Answering the Question : What Is Postmodernism ?," appears as an appendix to the book. The interesting move here is the illumination of the postmodern condition, along with the role played there by the imagination, by way of the aesthetic idea of the sublime. For Kant, the sublime is a product of the "conflict between the faculties of a subject, the faculty to conceive of something and the faculty to 'present' something." The sentiment of the sublime is altogether defferent from the judgment of taste, which depends on the false presentiment of consensus. The sublime sentiment "takes place .. when the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle,

come to match a concept." Modernist art which embodies an aesthetic of the sublime, gives existence to the unpresentable as "fact". A postmodernist aesthetic of the sublime would go beyond a similarly inspired modernist aesthetic by denying itself what Lyotard calls the "solace" provided by the redundant consistency of form found in modernist works. Avoiding this recourse to a form that stultifies by presenting itself not as the imaginable but as the real, postmodern works of art realize that, "it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the consivable which cannot be presented."

The form of this book would have benefited greatly from an incorporation of the aesthetic arguments found in the appendix (which are quite strongly rooted in the aesthetic theory of Adorno) into the provocative analyses presented in this earlier sections. Had Lyotard concentrated his energies on an analysis of the modernist or postmodernist artwork, as both symptom and cipher of the reproduction of social life, the bite and cut of his commentary would have reached deeper. Such an analysis might have better equipped Lyotard to confront Habermas's aesthetic ideas (especially since this is an area of increasing concern for Habermas), rather than lead to the unfounded and casual dismissal of Habermas, on this score, or having confused the aesthetic sublime with Freudian sublimation.

The danger provoked by this particular limitation is ably demonstrated in Jameson's foreword to the text. Jameson shows that in the end, Lyotard's true desire is, like Habermas's for a situation or "condition" practically indiscernible from that of critical high modernism.

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Sehdev Kumar. *The Lotus in the Stone* : An Allegory for Explorations in Dreams & Consciousness. Published simultansously by Alpha & Omega Books. Canada and Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. 1984. pp. 204. Rs, 195. Illustrated.

The Italian word *dilettante* means one who takes delight in something. What charaterises the dilettante is his delight in the preliminary nature of his never-to-be-culminated understanding. The mode of enquiry of the dilettante is distinct from the technique of the more stately gentleman of scientific decorum.

The Lotus in the Stone is a works of a dilettante of mythic images whose searching intelligence never refuses to acquiesce to the chance of being taught something new at each step. As such, this unusual volume strikes one as being somewhat of a scrap-book, full of extraordinary quatations and art pieces of great thinkers and artists from all over the world; at other times, it appears as a sort of personal journal; still at others, it presents poignant and provocative thoughts in a most refreshing and original manner. All together, *The Lotus* is a delightful work of considerable depth and elegance.

The questions that this book raises are at once simple and formidable : What is

consciousness ? How does it express itself in various elements in nature and human artifacts ? Does it exist only at one level, or are there lower and higher levels of consiousness ? And then, most crucially, now do we seek answers to these questions and attain other levels of consciousness. if there are any ?

In art, these questions have found many kinds of expressions over the centuries. But today they are also engaging the attention of thiners in other fields; in neurology, molecular biology, particle physics, mysticism, psychology. Indeed these questions are such that they cannot be explored in one academic area alone; they demand a wholistic approach it which the observer himself become the most imporatant subject of study. As the great physicist Niels Bohr put it :

> For a parallel to the lessons of atomic theory. We must turn to kinds of epistemological problems with which already the thinkers like the Budha and Lao Tzu have been confronted, when trying to harmonize our position as spectatators and actors in the great drama of existence.

In *The Lotus*, Professor Kumar observes the same epistemological problem in a more contemporary and existenial idiom :

> All explorations of consciousness require us to knock at many doors : of reason and imagination. of the real and the surreal of the machinists and the mystics. But the ultimate knock would have to be at the locked doors of our own beings; the real meaning answers will emerge only from the depths of our own ocean of consciousness.

Kumar sets out to explore the nature of consciousness through an allegory, by telling afresh-and uniquely-the story of Manu, the Primal Man of I dian mythology. Kumar's Manu, however, is a 'modern' man who stands at the threshold of the East and the West, of science and spirit. of ignorance and knowledge. By constantly grappling with myriad facets of life-with suffering and humiliation, poverty and violence, arrogance and destruction-Manu's seeking becomes an allegory of a pilgrim in search of his true self. In prose, that often verges on the poetic, Human expresses it thus :

> The true evolution of man is to what he is-a Man. No more. No less. The other creatures in the universe seem not to ark about themselves and wonder who they are. They are what they are But man alone questions; "Who am I ?" This is at once his glory and his torment
>
> "The nature of a rose is to emit fragrance," Manu thought. "The nature of the sun is to radiate. The nature of the dog is to be a dog Then what is the nature of man ?"

In literature, allegories are a difficult genre. because the philosophical questions that guide their structers, tend to make them somewhat pedantic. *The Lotus* avoids this with delicacy and with good deal of craftsmanship. The works that strike one as the closest parallels to *The Lotus* are Albert Camus *Myth of Sisyphur*, Herman Hesse's *Siddhartha* and

Rene Daumal's *Mount Analogue*. Yet *The Lotus*, at various levels, is a more complex and richer work. Like Joseph Campbell's *Mythic Image*, it presents the allegory of Manu with an enchanting set of visual images drawn from various sources The use of these images-many of them without any direct reference in the text-and numerous poems and thoughts that appear through out the book, make *The Lotus* truly a work of a dilettante. meant to initiate a dialogue, a reflection, an enquiry. There is no attempt here to anatomize or classify various academic studies in the field of consciousness. At places, there are occasional discussions about evolucion, about poetry, and about the nature of suffering. But they too are all inter-woven as an integral part of the allegory' I have called Kumar's work as that of a dilettante, for what comes across most clearly in *The Lotus* is a sense of delight, This sense-for too rare in scholarly writing-has set free an unmistakeable creative spirit in Kumar. He tetells Greek and Indian myths, uses parables and metaphors, narrates dreams and pantasies, and employs ideas and images from every where. Sometimes, in fact, the richness of its pattern makes one a little dizzy; it is not unlike entering the Minakshi Temple at Madurai Kumar has asked some eternal questions afresh. These are not questions that can be answered once, and for all. He has suggested, here and there, how these questions may be made lucid, and how the answers one formulates may be kept free of dogma-whether of science or of religions. As the famous Indologist Heinrich Zimmer said it" a cupped handful of the fresh waters of life is sweeter than a whole reservoir of dogma, piped and guaranted."

The Lotus is a most admirable attempt at providing "a cupped handful of the fresh waters of life."

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M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, (Trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Halquist) (University of Taxas Press : Austin, 1981, pp. 444.)

Just after the death of Bakhtin in 1975, a collection of some of his important assays was published under the title, *Questions of Literature and Aesthetics*. Out of them Michael Holquist selects four essys to make them into the present book, The four essays in this book are united by their concern with the poetics of the novel. The reader finds himself grappling with more and more difficult ideas as he moves from one essay to the next.

In the first essay Bakhtin contracts the novel with the other genres. Acconding to him it is the semantic open-endedness and a contact with the incomplets reality that distinguishess novel from the other genres that are static. The developing nature of the novel enables it to development as a process. Baktin's discussion here of the three-dimensionality and multilanguaged consciousness of the novel foreshadows the more complex internal dialogism of the word explained in the last essay. The novel, Bakhtin would say, stands in a parodic

relationship to the other genres unmasking the traditionalism of their form.

Out of the other genres the author choses epic to be compared with novel. His choice is probably guided by the traditional connection between the epic and the novel. He sees a lot of difference between the two forms. The absolute past of the epic is walled off from the subsequent times in which the narrator and the readers exist as opposed to the novel's relation to the contemporary reality. The element of laughter in the novel, which traces its roots in the folklore, distinguishes the novel from the epic. It is this laughter, together with the search for a new point of view, that threaters to destory epic, the embodiment of a unitary experience, a form which demands a single and "pious attitude towards itself." Through the use of laughter the novel shows man ceasing "to coincide with himself" whereas the epic presents the appearance and actions of the individual "on a single plane"

In the second essay Bakhtin discovers the seeds of the novel in the falilier speech of the folkloric and low literary genres where parody played in important role. But in ancient times, the parodic-travestying, he records, was without a form. It was nothing more than ridiculing another's language and another's direct discourse. The parodic-travestying forms matured into the novel by their capacity to create a distance between languages and reality, an indispensable condition for the realitic kind of discourse, and by their potential for accommodating polylossia which completely liberates consciousness from the power of its own language and its own mythof language. Laughter and polyglossia had anticipated the novelistic discourse of modern times. The novelistic word was born and developed not out of a mere literary struggle of abstract world views but in a very complex and long struggle of cultures and languages. A modern student of novel could feel that Bakhtin stretches the concept of the novel too far. But the fact is, though other qualities creep into this genre and assume importance in course of time, there is an awareness of an alien language flowing through a particular kind of literature down the ages and acting as its organizing principle, on the basis of which Bakhtin charts the genealogy of the novel.

In the third essay Bakhtin makes a chromotopic analysis of the ancesters of the novel and figures out in them the changing image of man, the pluralisation, abstraction and privatisation of his experiences. He finds in the Greek Romance a faith in the indestructible power of man against nature and against all human forces. This is conveyed through an "extra-temporal hiatus", during which the leading character remains unchanged, "between two moments of real time sequence." In the adventure novel of everyday life unlike in the Greek Romance there is an idea of growth. But it is wrapped in a "mythological sheath" of metamorphosis. It consists of a series of crisis and rebirth instead of an evolution. This kind of novel deals with private life but only through overhearing and cavesdropping while discussing the ancient biography and

autobiography Bakhtin talks of the exteriority of human image in the classical art and literature and the gradual breaking down of the public wholeness of the individual and the human image becoming multi-lagered in the subsequent forms of autobiography. According to him folklore is an endless source of realism for literature, specially the novel. But the folkloric realism demands space and time for the full realization of an individul in contrast with the metaphoric system of ideals in literature at a later stage.

In the last essay Bakhtin stresses the need for any study of verbal art to unite the formal and the ideological opproach. His concept of heteroglossia on the novelistic discourse affirms the ideological colouring of language. He conceives language not as a system of grammatical categories but as ideologically saturated, as a world view. This requires him to reject the traditional concept of stylistics as a private craftsmanship. According to him the stylistic profile of the word is shaped by an interaction of the novelistic discourse with the heteroglossia. His idea of stylistics is invested with a dialogue. Bakhtin makes a clear distinction between the poetic and the novelistic discourse. In the novelistic discourse the word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. Born in an atmosphere of the already spoken the word is determined at the same time by the answering word, by what is yet to be said. The opposing environment of the alien word presents itself to the speaker in the conciousness of the listener.

The integration of the formal and the ideolgial approch fecilitates Bakhtin's making a profound statement on the philosophy of language through the poetice of the novel' Modern linguistic and literary studies can ignore this work of Bakhtin, but at a great cost.

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Richard Shusterman : *The Object of Literary Criticism*; Rodolpi; Amsterdam, 1984. (237 pp)

The book grows from shustermans Oxford doctoral thesis; it consists of a brief preface and seven chapters. In the first chapter, Shusterman attempts to locate the literary work of art within the general canon of art. In particular he wishes to stress the anomalous character of literature by emphasising how traditional categorisations of art-for example, visual vs. performing-have no grip vis a vis. literary works of art. Against those (he cites Urmson and Mrs. S nith) who argue that literary works are a kind of silent or private performance, Shusterman urges persuasively that this view is simply incompatible with the phenomenology of the literary experience. If literature has this anomalous nature, then, we need to understand its character, and also the conditions under which we are and those under which we are not confronting the same work of literature again. Th ese topics, ontological status and identity, take up two

following chapters. But first, in Chapter Two, Shusterman attempts to relate the four problems that he will consider—identity, ontological status, interpretation and evaluation-to show how a proper understanding of one depends on a proper understanding of the others.

To consider these issues in pairs, identity and ontological status are clearly related. At its simplest, if I wish to count the number of works of literature in a particular room. I need to know both what a work of literature is, so that I know whether to count the three volumes of my copy of Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* as three works or one work, and also I need to decide or sort out whether there are two works or one when I have two copies of James Joyce's *Ulysses* on my shelf. Shusterman's own argument, is in essence this counting one. Similarly, questions of interpretation are clearly related to questions of evaluation. I need to have interpreted the work before I can begin evaluating it— or so it seems. Moreover, without the application of some of the evaluative categories to my particular work it may be difficult, perhaps even impossible, to begin interpretation of it. Questions of evaluation and interpretation on the one hand, and questions of ontology and identity on the other are clearly related.

The main thrust of Shusterman's work, is towards a radical pluralism. His general strategy is to distinguish a number of opposing positions in the works of philosophers, and then to argue that all of these strategies embody something right about their subject matter, but err in taking that insight to excess. Thus the correct view, in Shusterman's opinion, is a kind of pluralism which embraces the appropriateness of *some* cases of all these philosophical insights, but denies the Universal applicability to all cases of any one of them.

The philosophers concerned would have been very dissatisfied to find their comments integrated into some kind of pluralism. What kind of objections can we imagine them making ? In general Shusterman has little to say about this. He seems to think that his pluralism can accommodate this puzzling variety of apparently contradicting views. In particular, the strength of his argument seems to rest in those examples, for if critics genuinely do proceed in these different ways, then presumably any philosophers who have urged that they cannot or should not are somehow mistaken. But here we may strike a note of caution which perhaps Shusterman does not. For a major tradition in Anglo-American analytical philosophy has drawn a distinction between grammatical form and logical form : that is to say, between what appears to be going on in sentences (roughly) and what is *actually* going on. Thus one might expect the philosophers of these different persuasions to urge that Shusterman's critical examples, while superficially fitting the models they oppose, are— at some more profound level of analysis-entirely compatible with their own preferred models. I am not for a moment suggesting that this is right. But certainly it

is not a view which Shusterman takes vary seriously. No doubt this is in part due to his rejection of the grammatical form/logical form distinction; or anyway, his desire not to take it very seriously. while that decision seems to me entirely correct, I can imagine that it will not sit too happily with other writers on philosophical aesthetics. If Shusterman offers no elaborated response to such criticism, it is clear that he wishes to take very seriously another kind of criticism of his pluralism. Thus he attempts to defend it from objections of a kind generally levelled against relativistic views: that it makes the particular 'games' played by critics all equally adequate or appropriate. Shusterman offers one straightforward reply, and one slightly more puzzling one. The puzzling reply is that "Even critics must accept that much of their evaluative statement consists not of accurate description but of motivated urging and institutional rendering" (p. 211). He distinguishes between questions internal to criticism made by critics, and those presented from some 'external' viewpoint. The first of these are clearly areas where one can be right and wrong, where one can contrast effective or appropriate ways of proceeding with others. As to the other kind of question, the external question which seeks to find a complete account of criticism, and hence to suggest that one's view of criticism is better or more appropriate (or) than some other, Shusterman's view is uncompromising, Such an 'external' view is impossible. Any aesthetician who attempts it is simply confused.

In the concluding chapter dealing with the question whether criticism is science or art Shusterman's overall conclusion is that this train of thought is misguided in two ways. First, it does not properly understand the nature of science but second, it has an over-admiration for certain values traditionally associated with scence. That is to say, that only by being scientific can criticism become acknowledged as valuable. Here Shusterman has two comments. He thinks that the personal character of critical judgement is demonstrabls as an essential rather than peripheral feaure of criticism' and hence thet Frye's model of a personal judgement-free criticism is a misconceived one; but also, that this does nothing to undermine the objectivity of criticism. Finally, he thinks the issue something of a tempest in a teacup. Careful analysis will allow us to see that the values from some scientific criticism are entirely inappropriate to the criticism of literature : those which undermine (if they do) the role of personal judgement in literary criticism are clearly misplaced. On the other hand, a proper understanding of criticism, and in particular an understanding of the essential plurality of critical metnods and procedures, allows the retention of many of the supposed virtues of science for criticism. Notice how this issue becomes, in Shusterman's treatment, a way of reaffirming the pluralism he has advocated throughout the rest of the book. The objection to criticism implicit in the claim that it is unscientific amounts to an assertion of some kind of inchoate character, where various methods,

procedures, models and so on, each in conflict with the others, are yet not open to the kind of evaluation that would decide in favour of one and against those others. But Shusterman wishes to urge that pluralism is "a healthy asset" (p. 224) of criticism rather than a reason for objection to it; and this is so because it is "a natural and proper response to the complexity of the literary object and the variety of critical aims" (p. 224). That is to say, Shusterman returns us, at the end of the book, to the topic he had set up at the beginning : we need to understand the object of literary criticism, and when we do that, we realise that there are a plethora of such purposes for literary criticisms, at different times and places, and among different schools; and moreover that the object of literary criticism, the literary work of art, is itself a complex and anomalous one which needs at one time to be treated in one way, and at another time in some other way. the book is obviously Valuable for the aestheticians and literary theorists.

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